

525 similar powers to those of the feudatory mon-
413 archs, but, though they were accorded the title
631 of Samantans, were considered of lower ritual
rank than the Zamorin's lineage. Similarly,
some nads of the Cochin kingdom were governed
by conquered feudatory kings of higher ritual
rank than, but administratively subordinate to,
the royal lineage, and others by lower ranking
Samantan chiefs appointed by the king. Within
each kingdom, the Samantan chiefs' lineages
formed a single subcaste.

525 Each nad was in turn divided into villages or
621 desams, the basic units of the political system.
423 A desam appears usually to have covered from
one to four square miles, comprising one or more
stretches of dry garden land surrounded by, or
surrounding, flats of alluvial paddy land. The
land in each desam was owned by one landlord
family of superior ritual rank to the other occu-
pants of the villages. In some villages, the land
was owned by a single Nambudiri partilineal
extended family whose large house stood in a
central position in the village. In others, it was
owned by one or other branch of the royal mat-
rilineage which had built a small palace in the
village and whose eldest male member acted as
a village headman. In other villages, the land
was owned by the chiefly matrilineal lineage of
the nad, whether this [15] were of feudatory rank
of vassal Samantan rank. Again in this case the
chiefly family would live in a small palace in the
centre of the village and fulfill the role of head-
man. In other villages, the land was owned by
some famous Hindu temple of the kingdom, often

565 at a distance of several miles, and managed by
 621 Nambudiri Brahmans. In this case a represen-
 423 tative Nambudiri patrilineal family might live
 in the village and play the role of headman. In
 yet other villages, which probably comprised
 about half the villages in the kingdom, the land
 was owned by the matrilineage of a hereditary
 Nayar village headman (desavari) originally
 appointed by the king or by the chief of the nad.
 The Nayar desavaris of a chiefdom collectively
 formed a subcaste ritually lower than the sub-
 caste of chiefs of their kingdom. In Walluvanad
 and Calicut the subcaste of village headmen was
 called Kiriattil Nayar; in Cochin they were
 called Vellayma Nayars.

565 The landowning families in all of these types
 622 of villages were called janmis. In every case,
 423 no matter whether the janmi were of a patriline-
 al or a matrilineal caste, the eldest man of
 the extended family had legal guardianship of
 his own family, and in another sense, of the
 village lands and the lower caste inhabitants.
 [16] In addition to his economic rights, the jan-
 mi had administrative rights. First, he must
 sanction marriages of all castes in the village,
 none of which could be performed without his
 consent. Second came ambalapadhi or control
 of ceremonies in the village temple(s); and third
 urayma or direction of temple lands and servants.
 [346] (It should be made clear that each village had its
 public temple apart from the larger temples of
 the chiefdom and the kingdom.) While headman
 of the village and a landowner in a certain sense,
 however, the janmi could not sell away his lands

565 without the direction of the chief. Usually, a
622 janmi family remained in situ over many gener-
423 ations. In addition, the janmi was obliged to
lease off on long term tenure a large part of his
lands to Nayar retainers and could not retract
these without the tenant's consent or without the
aid of a public assembly of tenants in case of
ill-doing on the part of one of them.

621 Traditional villages are classifiable therefore
631 as 1) Braham; 2) Temple; 3) Royal; 4) Chiefly;
565 5) Nayar headmen's villages. In some areas,
644 a group of villages of the same type might be
found adjacent to each other; this was particu-
larly the case with "Brahman" and "Nayar head-
men's" villages, where four or five might form
a cluster headed by janmis of the same subcaste.
[17] In each village, subordinate to the janmi's
lineage in ritual rank and administrative power,
came the members of one or other subcaste of
[701] Nayar retainers. Nayar retainers, whom I
shall also call Military Nayars since most of
them were soldiers, were divided into three
subcaste: 1) retainers of Nambudiri Brahmans
and of temples, called Sudra Nayars in Calicut
and Walluvanad and Illath Sudra Nayars in Co-
chin; 2) retainers of the royal lineage, or "pal-
anquin-bearers," called Pallichans in all three
kingdoms; and 3) retainers of the chiefs and the
Nayar village headmen, called Charna Nayars
in Calicut and Walluvanad and Swaroopattil Sud-
[24] ra Nayars in Cochin. Each of these subcastes
disputed for ritual rank and in everyday circum-
stances would not interdine with each other.

This dispute for rank was possible because they

437 (2) The Traditional Economic System

433 The kanam tenure had significance as an institution which linked the system of payments in kind, found within the inland villages, to the [433] cash economy of the coastal towns. Traditionally, each village appears to have been self-sufficient for the basic necessities of life. The high castes paid lower caste servants daily or thrice annually in paddy and the lower castes traded services and some goods with each other with paddy as their medium of exchange. Irava tenants paid their rents in paddy to Nayar kanakkar, who in turn paid a much smaller rent in paddy to the janmi.

Nayar men, however, though they lived mainly from the produce of their estates, were also paid in cash by the Raja in return for military service.

[436] The use of money was otherwise confined mainly to the coast-towns and to overseas' trade with the Arabs, Portuguese, Dutch, French and English in pepper and other commodities. This trade was largely carried on by the Muslims, who were originally, from the ninth century, converted from the lower Hindu castes by Arab traders. Muslim middlemen obtained pepper [442] from cultivators of inland and foothill villages in return for cloth obtained from overseas, or manufactured by Hindu castes of weavers in the towns. They traded the pepper for cash to Arabs and Europeans. The royal lineage obtained revenue by several kinds of taxes levelled on this merchandise, and paid the Nayar armies from its coffers. The Nayars in turn made periodic kanam cash payments to Nambudiri and other

437 landlords, who would otherwise, apparently, have
 423 been excluded from the cash economy. Such
 [511] money could be spent by the Nambudiri and Nay-
 ar aristocracy on clothing and imported luxury
 goods available in Muslim bazaars in the towns.
 Some Muslims also held kanam lands in villages
 whence they could obtain rice and vegetables.
 Others bought food for cash from Nayar tenants.
 [556] Apart from the kanam tenure the use of cash was,
 however, extremely restricted in inland villages,
 and surplus cash was converted into gold orna-
 [583] ments or other objects of ostentation. Among
 the lower castes small coins had a symbolic
 value, and a fixed number were handed over in
 marriage payments, but their use in economic
 exchange among the lower castes appears to have
 been negligible.

434 In spite therefore of the considerable overseas
 554 trade, the complex division of labour, and the
 marked differences in wealth (expressed chiefly
 in size of houses, differences of clothing and
 jewelry, and types of food) between the several
 castes, the overall economy of Kerala in the
 traditional period was relatively stationary, and
 such social mobility as there was, was confined
 to the Muslims, Christians and "good" Hindu
 castes above Nayar retainers. It appears to
 [613] have been this fact which permitted the persis-
 [631] tence of such a relatively rigid feudal system
 and the existence, within each homogeneous local
 caste group, of a lineage system as the main or-
 ganizing principle.

000 (3) Traditional Political Administration

601 (m. sp.). Except in a few "modern" marriages men do not address the wife's kin by terms, but instead use the name and caste title: many informants said they would not use terms for the wife's kinsfolk because they did not feel that they were kin - a traditional attitude. The main modern change therefore is the extension of primarily matrilineal terms to parallel kin of the father's matrilineal terms to parallel kin of the father's matrilineal group and their spouses. As it stands today, the terminological system thus faithfully reflects an extreme matrilineal system which has recently shifted towards bilaterality. [88]

613 VI. The Structure of the Royal Lineages

644 We saw that the traditional property-group of
423 retainer Nayars divided into segments when male members of the mother's generation were all dead, and that correspondingly the lineages of retainer Nayars went through a gradual process of fission between their major segments every [427] few generations. This state of affairs was in harmony with the relatively temporary relationship of retainer Nayars to the land, as kanam tenants, since kanam tenure permitted segments of a tarayas to hive off at intervals with ease.

This was not the case with the property-groups of royal and naduvari lineages, which were held together for longer periods by their joint ownership of extensive jenmam lands and by their political offices. These royal and chiefly taravads in most cases developed a somewhat different structure which enabled them to cohere for

613 longer periods.

644 In all the royal and chiefly lineages, political
423 office was normally held by the eldest member
irrespective of branch. In several of these lineages, however, including Calicut, Walluvanad and Kolattiri, there existed also separate offices subordinate to that of the kind. In Calicut, the five oldest men of the Zamorin's lineage, irrespective of branch, held five offices or sthanams (occupant = sthani), each with a landed estate, separately from the lands jointly owned by each property-group of the lineage. The eldest sthani was the Zamorin who ruled at Calicut. The second was called Eralpad: he was the naduvari of Ernad, the oldest of the Zamorin's nads, from which his forbears originally sprang. To prevent rivalry with the [89] king, the second sthani was forbidden during his tenure of office to cross over into the Calicut nad until the Zamorin died and he was summoned to perform the funeral rites and receive the crown. The third sthani, the Munalpac, was commander-in-chief of the Zamorin's army: his estate was in Calicut but he travelled throughout the kingdom. The two youngest sthanis held no political office but lived as desavaris or independent landlords in separate villages of the kingdom. When the Zamorin or any of the other sthanis died, those below him in rank moved up one place, and the next eldest man was appointed as the fifth sthani.

From the 14th century until 1792, the Zamorin's lineage was able to cohere as a single property-group without partition between its

613 segments lifted out of their group on to separate
 644 estates. The jointly owned land of the royal lin-
 • 423 eage, in Ernaq, was managed by the sixth man
 karanavan after the fashion of an ordinary Na-
 [701] yar property-group. As among Nayars, young-
 er men of the lineage were trained as soldiers
 and fought in the Raja's wars.

However, it also happened that during these centuries, the Zamorin's lineage did not greatly increase in numbers. Indeed, in the 18th century it was obliged to save itself from extinction by adopting three girls from the royal lineage of Nileswaram in South Canara, north of Kerala. In 1792, the Zamorin was conquered by the British and, along with other rulers of what became Malabar District, retired from political office as the head of a large landowning lineage. The British to compensate the royal lineages gave them political pensions, payable in cash sums annually to each male and female. Shortly afterwards, the Zamorin's [90] lineage began to increase in size, and by the mid-nineteenth century had partitioned into three property-groups, Pudiya (New) Tavari which lives in a village in the modern Calicut division of Malabar District, Padinyare (West) Tavari, also in Calicut, and Kirakke (East) Tavari in Ernad Division. Pudiya Tavari has this century partitioned into three new property-groups. The extensive lands of each group are managed by their separate karanavans. The five sthanams with their landed estates are still occupied by the five eldest members of the lineage, who in addition receive their political pensions independently of the rest.

613 The whole exogamous lineage now has over 300
 644 members. This growth in numbers in the Brit-
 423 ish period is part of the general increase in
 population all over Kerala; it is paralleled in
 many other royal and commoner lineages.

613 Within each property-group of the Zamorin's
 644 lineage, residential and economic arrangements
 593 differ somewhat from those of retainers. We
 may take as an example Kirakke tavari in Er-
 nad division. This property-group contains
 172 members and is the largest of the property-
 groups. It has a time-depth of eight genera-
 tions. Most of the members live in a single
 [344] kovilagam (palace) in Kottakkal village. The
 palace is a vast block of buildings with a fort
 at each corner and is surrounded by a moat.
 Within its precincts are, apart from the resi-
 dential buildings, a temple, an elementary
 school and a high school for children of the lin-
 eage and the Nayar children of princes, and
 four bathing pools. The palace has a central
 kitchen where food is cooked for all members,
 and two main wings to house men and women
 [91] respectively. There is separate accommo-
 dation for the Nambudiri Brahman husbands of
 the women, who live uxori locally at the expense
 of the palace. Each prince, and each princess
 with her small children, has a separate suite
 of two rooms. Children remain with their moth-
 ers in the women's quarters until the age of 15
 when the boys move into separate rooms in the
 men's quarters and are prohibited from visiting
 the women. Brother-sister avoidance is strict.
 If a man wishes to speak to his mother or an

613 elder sister or classificatory sister he must
 644 send a messenger to call her into the common
 593 hall. After ~~the~~ age of 15 he may not speak to a
 younger sister or classificatory sister, and may
 see them only in the distance. Contact between
 children and their Nambudiri fathers, as be-
 tween princes and their Nambudiri brothers-in-
 law, is also restricted: the Nambudiris live
 and eat separately from the princes, served by
 their own Brahman servants. It is obvious that
 such restrictions on social relations within the
 palace militate against affinal and intertavari
 quarrels, as well as against incest.

613 On all four sides of the palace are roads lead-
 644 ing into the village. This is crowded with the
 361 houses of Nayar retainers, each one of which
 427 is in some way connected with the palace, and
 leases kanam lands from it. Many dwelling-
 groups are those of the princes' Nayar wives
 and children, chiefly of the Pariccha Menon sub-
 caste; their forbears formed the private army
 of the Zamorin in traditional times. Other some-
 what poorer households belong to the Agattu
 Charna and Pallichan subcastes; both men and
 women work in the place, since each adult mem-
 ber living in it employs two Nayar servants of
 his or her own sex to do housework and act as
 messengers. The servants are still paid daily
 in rice.

613 [92] The lands of the kovilagam are held in the
 644 name of the eldest woman, but are managed by
 423 the karanavan who also receives and distri-
 butes the pensions of his group in amounts which
 differ according to age-rank in the group. This

613 is a recent practice which grew out of the de-
 644 mands for separate payments of those princes
 423 who had left the palace to find modern work out-
 side. Until about ten years ago, the karanavan
 completely controlled the group's finances and
 paid maintenance in kind to its members, even
 to toilet requisites such as oil for bathing and
 ash for cleaning the teeth. Since they began to
 receive allowances in cash, several princes
 have acquired private land and built small houses
 for their wives and children, where a very few
 of them now live and eat, despite caste rules
 against interdining with lower caste kinsfolk.
 In addition some princes now work in govern-
 ment service or in one of the coast towns or in
 one of the large cities of India. They return to
 the palace only for vacations and ceremonies.
 The lands of the major royal property-groups
 of Malabar are at present declared impartible
 by law, but there is dissatisfaction with this
 law among their younger members. Individual
 partition of property, in accordance with the new
 Nayar inheritance laws to be explained below,
 is expected to take place in most palaces within
 the next few years, and has already been applied
 for in some. The royal lineages are in fact now
 breaking down in precisely the same manner as
 are retainer Nayar taravads.

It is clear, however, that royal property-
 groups were traditionally able to comprise more
 segments and cohere for longer periods than
 could retainer groups. The differences in struc-
 ture which made this possible were: 1) the land-
 ed estates which were large enough to [93]

613 support many members and, together with the
 644 political office, had a sentimental value for
 423 them; 2) sthanams, which lifted the five oldest
 men out of the factionalism of their property-
 groups; 3) the spacious construction of palaces
 with privacy for each woman and her descen-
 dants, each adult man, and each visiting Nam-
 budiri husband; 4) the very rigid rules of eti-
 quette and avoidance which discouraged quar-
 rels between men and incest between men and
 women; 5) the ability of the palace to employ
 separate servants for each adult; and 6) the
 peculiar residence-arrangements in royal and
 a few chiefly lineages, which, together with the
 universal practice of hypergamy, gave the prop-
 erty-group some of the features of a matriclan
 (14) and enabled it to live for generations on the
 same site. The existence of Nambudiri Brah-
 mans as a leisure class of ritual specialists,
 many of whom were free to leave their own es-
 tates and live as drones (or "as breeding bulls",
 as one Calicut prince remarked) in the palaces,
 was crucial to this, as was the ability of the
 royal lineage, because of the concentration of
 wealth and political power in its hands, to main-
 tain a horde of retainer lineages at its doorstep
 to provide mistresses for the princes and a
 bodyguard for the king.

613 In spite of these special devices, royal and
 644 chiefly lineages did, even traditionally, divide
 into separate property-groups when their num-
 bers became unwieldy. Unfortunately I lack
 genealogies to show whether, as in retainer
 lineages, this regularly occurred at a particular

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in her care particular daily tasks in connection with cooking, house-
work, the pounding of paddy, and the tending of small children. The
minimal unit of one woman and her own children, although having a
special solidarity emotionally, was given very little recognition in the
division of work. Women cooked communally in the kitchen, bathed
and washed their own and any children's clothes in company in the
bathing pool, and at the harvests moved in household groups to the
fields to help the serf women of their families in cutting paddy. Nayar
women's agricultural work, however, was subsidiary and they took no
part in the more arduous tasks of transplanting and weeding. 613 462 [296] [243]

The women of a Nayar retainer lineage also owed services to women
of the landlord household to which their lineage was attached. Al-
though their lower-caste rank prevented them from touching their mis-
tress or entering her kitchen, they swept the house, accompanied its
womenfolk to their bathing pool, and did various household chores.
The landlord household normally chose three or four favorites from
among the lineages attached to them to perform these services, but
women of any retainer household might be summoned during the
special preparations for a feast. 613 566 357

Authority and Responsibility Property groups, rather than lineages, 613
were the main legal units within the local caste group. Their kārana-
vans formed the neighborhood assembly. Within the assembly, a
kāranavan acted on behalf of his property group in managing the
Nayar temple, settling small civil disputes in his own and lower castes,
and adjudicating in cases of offense against Nayar religious law. 592 [692]

A kāranavan also represented his property group in its relations with
its feudal lord and with higher authorities of the kingdom. We have
seen that the property group and not the lineage held land on tenure
from its landlord, and that although a lineage was attached to a land-
lord by hereditary right, the landlord conducted all economic trans-
actions separately with the head of each property group within it. [423] ●
Similarly, each kāranavan was required to represent his own property
group in ceremonial attendance on his village landlord, the chief of
his district, or (if he were a direct vassal of the royal lineage) his
king, at religious festivals associated with the temples of these digni-
taries.

On behalf of his property group, a kāranavan was held legally re-
sponsible for his juniors in most types of legal offense. He paid their
fines from taravād funds if they were found guilty of petty theft or
debt before the village headman or the chief. If a member of the tara-
vād was convicted in the royal court of treason, his kāranavan and 613 592 681 [687]

613 It seems probable that the property groups of retainer Nayars divided somewhat earlier in their development during the nineteenth century than during the period of native rule. The reason for this is that during British rule Nayar men, having no other compulsory work, considered themselves old enough to become karanavars by the age of thirty to forty, provided their appropriate elders were dead. In the traditional period, presumably, a man would be in arms until at least the age of fifty and would be unlikely to press for karanavarship before that age.

613 Further differences in the patterns of division of property groups must have arisen from the marked increase in population during British rule. This is not documented until after the 1870's but from genealogies it appears to have begun between four and five generations ago. The increase would mean that more women, and a higher proportion of women, would have had enough living children to become the founders of discrete lineage segments during their lives or shortly after their deaths. Thus property groups in the nineteenth century would divide not only at an earlier point in their structural development but also more frequently than was the case during native rule.

613 The absolute size of traditional property groups was limited by the amount of land available to each. It can be roughly gauged by the size of the houses they left behind. It seems unlikely that a traditional retainer property group would contain more than twenty-five to thirty people, or fewer than six.

Interpersonal Kinship Relationships

121 I describe the relationships between kinsfolk as these have existed in the recent past in the most "traditional" households, making reference to earlier periods when this is possible.

WOMAN-SON

593 The relationship of mother and son was the strongest in the system in the sense of mutual obligation and the expectation of mutual love. A man should place the needs of his mother above those of all other kin. A woman should show equal concern for her children of both sexes, but it was expected that her primary attachment would be to her sons.

[858] A woman's obligations to both daughters and sons in their early childhood included breast feeding to the age of two or three, care, especially in sickness, and instruction in cleanliness and in the manners and morals of their caste.

595 Leaving aside the problem of origins, however, what I would argue
182 is that the *specific* form of group marriage evolved among Central
701 Kerala Nayars in the period of the native kingdoms was particularly
[566] adapted to their military organization, which in turn was made possible by the existence of the lower castes of sub-tenants and serfs. The work of the tenants and serfs absolved Nayar men from the duty of maintaining the women and children of either their natal or their conjugal units by their own productive activities. It set free most of these men for a lifetime of military service; in each matrilineal group only one old man was needed at home to organize the work of the household's retainers. Given matrilineal descent and inheritance, and given the mobility of men and the absence of male economic obligations to kinswomen, there was no reason why either men or women should restrict themselves to particular spouses. There was also, as the early European writers realized, a positive value for the kingdom in their not doing so, for plural marriages discouraged soldiers from forming deep attachments to particular wives and children, and encouraged them to focus their loyalty on military leaders and on the matrilineal groups through which they were recruited. At the same time, plural marriages provided the soldiers with ready comforts and a night's lodging both in their own villages and in other villages of the kingdom through which they might pass. Whether or not chiefs regularly enforced indiscriminate mating among Nayar women of their districts in order to strengthen their soldiers' allegiances, a system of group marriage involving optional multiple alliances certainly fitted the way of life of a landed militia, already (for historical reasons) organized into matrilineal descent groups. A close connection between group marriage and the military organization is further suggested in that, after the British had disbanded the armies in about 1800, although matrilineal descent persisted for over a century, group marriage rapidly died out. Within about thirty years monogamous marriage in Central Kerala, and monogamous or restricted, fraternally polyandrous marriage in Travancore, had become common, and fathers had assumed a definite role in the upbringing of their children.

Kinship in the Aristocratic Matrilineal Castes

613 THE LINEAGE

592 Among the retainer Nayars a household whose membership rose above
● 423 about thirty tended to divide its property between its segments when the senior males who had spanned the segments were dead. Correspondingly, lineages and clans of retainer Nayars went through a grad-

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ual process of fission. This state of affairs was in harmony with the small amounts of land controlled by retainer property groups and with the relatively temporary relationship of retainer Nayars to their land. The conditions of *kānam* tenure not only allowed for changes in the tenures of plots of land within one village, but even permitted segments of an expanding *taravād* to change their feudal allegiances and if necessary to hive off from their natal village. 613
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423 ●

The situation was different in the aristocratic lineages of royalty and district chiefs. By *jenmam* right they owned large domains which could support greater numbers of members. Their members also had a stake in the political office which they were reluctant to surrender. On the whole these lineages tended to cohere for longer periods than did those of retainers. Some of them today number over three hundred members and trace their descent back to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. When segments of these lineages did move away from their ancestral lands it was usually because they had been conquered and forced to vacate their territories and offices. (72)

In the beginning, when one of these aristocratic lineages rose to power, it did so as a small property group. It did so either (in the case of royals) through conquest or (in the case of chiefs) through being appointed to office by some royal power. When they acquired office these upstart property groups seem to have severed ties with their former lineages and clans and to have conferred on themselves a higher ritual rank as independent castes.

After a few generations such a property group might expand in numbers and separate out into segments. I lack data on the precise point at which aristocratic property groups segmented; it seems to have been always at a later point with them than with retainer Nayars. (Today, some royal and chiefly property groups have a time depth of eight or more generations and over a hundred members.) When fission did occur the segments moved into separate palaces, each taking a portion of the ancestral domain for its maintenance. The oldest man resident in each segment acted as *kāranavan* and managed its internal affairs. For a time at least, the political office remained vested in the oldest man of the lineage irrespective of branch. When he was able, he kept a tight hold over all the segments, deflecting part of their income to himself for the upkeep of his palace staff, private army, and the larger forces he mustered through his subordinate vassals in war. The office bearer also retained sole right to the customs dues on trade within his chiefdom or kingdom, and to the tribute from village headmen within his area of rule. 613
(651)

Nayan North Kerala

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marks that "When a high-caste Nayar becomes ripe, he turns into a king."

Low productivity and poor communications perhaps made the exaction of tribute more difficult than in Central Kerala, and this fact, plus the uncertain nature of trade, made the local rulers perennially short of funds. This is probably the reason why, although they were trained for warfare in gymnasia in their villages, Nayars were not regularly conscripted into a national army. Instead, they merely fought sporadically on behalf of local chiefs. Further, chiefs and village headmen were insufficiently strong to bring all the land under their control. Their domains were larger than those of Nayar commoners, but most commoner Nayar property groups were independent small landlords in their own right within their villages. Since they were not full-time warriors and since in many areas they had no serfs, Nayar commoners also did part of their own cultivation on their small estates. Part of their land, however, they leased to Tiyyar tenants as in Central Kerala. The polluting castes of village servants had the same rights and spatial distribution as in Central Kerala. In general, the economic processes of reciprocity and redistribution in villages proceeded in a comparable manner.

As independent warrior-cultivators, the Nayar commoners were not divided into separate castes of retainers owing allegiance as vassals and *kānam* tenants to different kinds of lords. Most villages were nominally under Nayar village headmen. In villages of the Kottayam and Kadattunad kingdoms, both the headman's lineage and those of the Nayar commoners belonged to a large caste called Nambiar, who appear to have intermarried throughout the kingdom. Although of the same general caste as commoners, and not forbidden by religious law from intermarrying equally with commoners, Nambiar village headmen's lineages tended, however, to intermarry only with each other or to take wives only from the commoners, occasionally giving their own women in marriage to chiefs or Brahmans. Chiefs claimed a higher caste rank as Samantan Nambiar, and royalty as Kshattriyas. These aristocratic lineages conducted hypergamous marriages with each other and with Nambudiris as in Central Kerala.

Judicial processes were somewhat less centralized than in the Central kingdoms. At least in theory, grave crimes and civil disputes in urban centers seem to have been tried in royal courts, but most civil disputes inland were apparently tried by local chiefs. Under the chiefs, caste assemblies of neighborhoods took care of crimes against religious law as in the Central kingdoms. Murder among Nayars

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613 THE PROPERTY GROUP

564 The property group, a segment of the lineage, was among Nambiar
422 commoners of roughly the same size and internal composition as
423 among the Nayar retainers of Central Kerala. Its members jointly
owned both movable and immovable property in the same manner.
Its karanavan managed the estate, had legal guardianship over mem-
bers, and was legally responsible for them to the local caste assembly
and to the chief. All Nayar property groups appear to have owned some
[427] garden and rice lands as *jenmis*. In addition some leased land on
k^{an}am tenure from chiefs, royalty, or Brahmins if any were present
in their village. A property group whose membership was expanding
might bring under cultivation waste land belonging to the chief on a
tenure known as *kurik^{an}am*. The tenant had the right of occupancy
for twelve years without paying rent; he then paid an annual share of
produce to the landlord. The improvements he made (trees, houses,
etc.) were his own and he could not be evicted without compensation
for them.

613 Residence was ideally *avunculocal*. Plural marriages for women were
591 forbidden, and a man normally brought his wife to live with him on
his matrilineal estate for the duration of the marriage. This mode of
residence was apparently related to population density and to the
sexual division of labor. Some duolocal marriages did exist between
partners living in nearby houses in the same village. However, houses
and villages were so scattered that most men would have had dif-
ficulty in maintaining a visiting relationship with a wife. Matrilocal
[901] residence was also disadvantageous because men did much of the
work of cultivation on their own estates, were required to defend their
estates against invaders, and were mobilized by the chiefs in war
on the basis of property-group membership. A few junior men lived
matrilocally for short periods, but the karanavan and most of the
adult men lived on their own estates.

613 In the relatively small property groups of commoners, the dwelling
592 group was thus often an avunculocal extended family. It would
[596] comprise a group of brothers, their wives and immature children,
their adult sisters' sons, and the wives and small children of these
men. Divorced or widowed women born into the property group also
had the right of permanent residence there, and married women born
into it might return to live there for several weeks or months when
they wished.

In the larger property groups of some commoners, village head-
men, and chiefs, the main ancestral house might be reserved for

divorced or widowed women of the group and their children, together with temporarily divorced men or elderly widowers. The karanavan, his wife, and his immature children would occupy a wing of the ancestral house or a separate building in the same courtyard. Married men of the group would live with their wives and children in separate houses, all on the matrilineal estate. The karanavan would then allocate separate gardens and rice fields for usufruct to each married man. A junior would often hold such land on k^{anam} tenure from the tarav^{ad} as a whole. The karanavan would retain a larger portion of the estate for his own maintenance and that of unmarried persons living in the ancestral house. In any case he retained ultimate management of the whole property and might retract portions of it at will. If, however, a junior man leased new land from the tarav^{ad} on kurik^{anam} tenure, the improvements he made on it might, by custom although not by law, become the separate property of his mother's matrilineal descendants. If, later, the whole property was divided between major segments of the property group, each branch might take as its share the fields and gardens on which improvements had been made by male members of that branch. In the larger aristocratic tarav^{ads} one or two sth^{anam} estates might be set aside for the men immediately junior to the karanavan. Their holders managed such estates with greater independence than the plots allocated to more junior men. All cultivation was carried on with the aid of Tiyyar laborers attached by hereditary right to the tarav^{ad}. In some cases also plots were given on sub-tenure to Tiyyar cultivating tenants in the same manner as in Central Kerala.

A man might also—at least in the nineteenth century—with the consent of his own and his wife's karanavan, lease land on k^{anam} or kurik^{anam} tenure from his wife's tarav^{ad}. A few junior men actually went to live matrilocally in the wife's ancestral house or in a separate house which they built on the wife's ancestral estate. Houses and improvements to land provided by a husband in this way customarily became the separate property of the wife and her matrilineal descendants. Land on which such improvements had been made also normally passed to the wife's descendants as their share when the whole property of the wife's tarav^{ad} was finally divided. Matrilocal residence by a junior man was rare and could always be objected to by the man's karanavan if his services were needed at home. However, a man who was himself a karanavan had considerable freedom to build a house and develop new gardens on his wife's tarav^{ad} estate, which would later enrich his wife's matrilineal descendants. If

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423 the wife's taravād was near his own he might divide his time between
613 his own ancestral house and the private house he had built for his
429 wife and her descendants on her ancestral estate.
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613 Although this was contrary to customary law, some men also man-
431 aged to give jenmam land outright to a wife and her matrilineal de-
423 scendants, thus founding a new branch taravād through the wife.
[671] This practice greatly increased in the nineteenth century, when new
[428] gardens were continually being developed on former waste land and
when land became freely marketable. In 1896, indeed, a law was
finally passed enabling a man's wife and children to inherit half of
his self-acquired intestate property (Malabar Marriage Act, 1896).

Occasional gifts of land to the wife and her descendants were, how-
ever, known long before the British period, although they were
against the law. At the political level, kings and chiefs occasionally
gave large domains, together with the office of chief or village head-
man, to their wives' matrilineal descendants. The chiefships of both
[634] Nileswaram and Kadattunad are said to have been formed in this
[635] way by gifts from Kolattiri kings before the fourteenth century; both
later became virtually independent kingdoms (Logan, 1951, I: 343;
Ayyar, 1938: 4). Many smaller territories and political offices were
similarly bequeathed during the period of European trade. On a
smaller scale, the kārānavan of a Nambiar taravād sometimes man-
aged to take out a portion of the fallow jenmam land of his own
taravād, cultivate it, and give it to his wife and her descendants.
[578] Naturally, such gifts, which were in no sense a part of acknowledged
[627] lawful custom, led to disputes with the donor's matrilineal kin and
sometimes, in the next generation, to feuds between lineages.

Gifts of land or improvements by a man to his wife's descendants
led to the existence of branch property groups, called *tāvāri-taravāds*,
within the main property group. After the donor's death the wife's
kārānavan might manage such a small estate on behalf of her branch,
423 retaining the income separately for her and her children. More com-
592 monly, the donor's eldest son became the kārānavan of the *tāvāri*
property, while the branch also continued to receive its ancestral dues
out of the property of the taravād as a whole. When a stirpital di-
vision of the whole taravād occurred, this branch might claim both
its separate estate and its share of the ancestral property. If the donor
had been a chief and the gift was large, the branch to which it was
given might, however, choose to leave its taravād without taking a
share of the ancestral estate and to found a new taravād home on its
new land. *Tāvāri-taravāds* were, however, rare among commoners

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until the second half of the nineteenth century. Their existence before 1750 seems to have been chiefly associated with conquest of land by chiefs. After the British conquest they became associated rather with the gradual expansion of the population to newly cultivated lands, and with the ability of men to acquire land as personal and freely marketable property.

Recent Developments in
North and Central Kerala Contrasted

The modern North Kerala practice, whereby a man acquires newly cultivated garden land and gives it to his wife and children, makes Nayar residence heterogeneous at the present time. My data come from a village of Kottayam division where, in 1948, the great majority of Nambiar men were small owner- or tenant-cultivators. It was found that out of 42 Nambiar houses, 23 (55 per cent) had been built by individual men and given to their wives and children. Only 45 per cent had been built in the traditional manner by a matrilineally related group of men for their taravād.

Regarding the constitution of households, it was found that 29 per cent were "traditional," avunculocal extended family households comprising matrilineally related men, their wives, and small children, with or without divorced or widowed mothers or sisters of these men; 48 per cent contained an elementary family with or without another relative of either husband or wife—a widowed mother, unmarried sibling, etc.; 14 per cent contained a widow or divorcee with her unmarried children; 7 per cent contained a segment of a lineage—a group of matrilineally related men and women of the Central Kerala type, with the men visiting their wives in other households; 2 per cent (1 house) contained a man whose wife had just died, and the unmarried children.

Taking the residence of the 53 married couples by household, it was found that 26 per cent lived in the traditional manner in the matrilineal home of the husband. Some of these husbands were karanavans; others lived avunculocally with a mother's brother. Fifteen per cent lived duolocally as in Central Kerala, with the husband visiting the wife. At least half, however, were couples in which the wife had recently had a child and was only temporarily living in her natal home; she would later return to her husband's matrilineal home, thus bringing the total percentage of couples in the husband's matrilineal home up to about 33 per cent. Six per cent lived patrillocally in the husband's father's private house, while 4 per cent lived

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591 matrilocally in a home with the wife's mother and sometimes with
178 others of her older matrilineal kin. Twenty-six couples (49 per cent)
592 lived neolocally in a house provided by the husband and containing
no natal kin of either husband or wife. Of these 26 neolocally resident
couples, 6 (11 per cent) lived in a house which the husband had in-
herited from his dead father; 3 (6 per cent of the total) lived in a
house which the husband had obtained from his taravād; 14 (26 per
cent) lived in a house newly built by the husband for his wife.

594 These figures may be contrasted with the modern picture in a
613 Central Kerala village, where the marketability of land and labor
178 have also brought about a partial disintegration of matrilineal descent
groups and an emergence of the elementary family as a residential
and economic unit. Both in Central and in North Kerala, moreover,
595 marriage has been compulsorily monogamous since the 1930's, men
656 have been legally obliged to maintain their wives and children, and
178 the whole of man's private intestate property has passed to his mother,
428 wife, and children at his death (Madras *Marumakkattāyam* Act, 1933;
Cochin Nayar Act, 1938; Nair, 1941: 306). In addition, it has now be-
come legally possible for the members of a taravād to divide their
421 matrilineal ancestral property on a per capita basis. Once the an-
613 cestral property has been divided into individual shares in this way
178 it becomes private property in law and is heritable in the same manner
as are self-acquisitions. Both in Central and North Kerala, therefore,
economic change and resultant modern laws have combined to break
down traditional matrilineal descent groups.

425 In Central Kerala, however, population is denser and there has
178 been less waste land available for individual cultivation. Over the
464 past hundred years, therefore, when individual men have acquired
private plots, it has more often been through purchase of already
cultivated land than through cultivation of virgin land. Further,
176 Nayar men in Central Kerala, having been a professional militia,
[701] tended after the disbanding of their armies either to remain non-
cultivating owners and tenants or where possible to move into new
forms of salaried employment. Central Kerala today is more urbanized
than is North Kerala, so that a much greater proportion of Nayars
have salaried work in factories, as clerks, as government servants, as
schoolteachers, or in the armed services. Many are unemployed and
merely live from their ancestral lands. Particularly among retainer
Nayars, who are relatively poor, men have amassed less self-acquired
land than was possible for Nayar cultivators in North Kerala. More-
over, because Nayar men are often not themselves the cultivators of

their land, there has been a tendency—under the new law of division of taravād property—for women and immature children to retain the ancestral houses and much of the land and for men to take their individual shares of the property in cash. Thus, having left their taravāds with their shares, some men now find themselves living in a house owned by the wife and her young children. Other men pool their share of property with that of the wife and jointly buy a new garden and house. When the location of their work permits it, most men remain in their ancestral homes until middle age and visit their wives in the traditional manner.

Modern residential patterns in Central Kerala, although moving in the direction of autonomy for the elementary family, thus show a different bias from that seen in North Kerala. Our contrast is made with data from a Cochin village three miles from a large town, where 75 per cent of Nayars of retainer castes worked for wages in the town. Here, out of 65 high-caste Nayar houses, 40 (61 per cent) had been built by kāranavans for their taravāds in the traditional manner; only 22 per cent had been built by a man for his wife and children, and 11 per cent had been built or bought jointly by husband and wife; 3 per cent had been built by a man for his private use, and 3 per cent by a woman for herself and her children.

Taking the constitution of households, we find that 46 per cent contained matrilineage segments more or less of the traditional type, except that one or more husbands of the women might live regularly in the house. Seventeen per cent contained a "broken" matrilineage segment, the adult men of which had left their natal kinswomen, taken a share of the property in cash, and gone to live with their wives. In these houses the husbands of the remaining women might or might not be living with their wives. Twenty-nine per cent of the households were simple elementary families; 3 per cent contained only one man; 3 per cent contained an extended family composed of some modern mixture of matrilineal and patrilineal kin; and one house contained a widow with her small children.

Taking the residence of married couples by household, we find that out of 100 couples, 58 lived duolocally, the husband dividing his time between his natal home and that of his wife in the traditional manner. In some cases the wife might occasionally move for a few weeks to live in the husband's natal home if circumstances made this particularly desirable. Such an arrangement was however very modern in Central Kerala; it was much disliked by women and was seldom resorted to. Eighteen of the couples lived matrilocally; the couple

by the big cadjan umbrellas of the female inmates of the Illam. On the third day the door is opened, and whatever remains in the vessel of the dough and milk placed there is thrown into a tank as unfit for human use. The mixing up of noorum palum and the performing of the poojahs are done by the eldest female member of the Illam. The noorum palum is made of rice-flour, saffron powder, cow's milk, water of the tender cocoanut, fruit of the Kadali plantain, and ghee. In the Nálukettu of the house, offerings of noorum palum and cooked rice, as well as kuruthi (a red liquid composed of flour, saffron and chunam), take place every Ayilyam (star) day. Every morning the king and queen of serpents are washed, and an offering of fruit and milk is made to them; in the noon offerings of Vellanivedyam (cooked rice) and afterwards of fried grain (malar) follow. During the month of Kartika, a special poojah called navakom and offering of noorum palum are daily observed. On the Sivarátri day, in the month of Mási, the customary five poojahs and navakom are performed, and in the evening of the same day sacrificial offerings to the serpents and kuruti, as stated above, are made, and at the conclusion of the day's poojahs the idols are taken in procession round the temple. On Ayilyam (star) days, in the months of Purattási and Alpasi, all the serpent idols in the grove and the temples therein are taken in procession to the Illam, and offerings of noorum palum, kuruti and cooked rice are made there in propitiation of the serpent gods. The person who carries the idol of the Nágarája is the eldest female member of the Illam, and the procession is conducted with great pomp and rejoicings. According to my informant, the eldest female member of the house, though married, is expected to lead a celibate life when she becomes the oldest female in the family. During the festive days at Mannársála, about 5,000 people assemble to worship and propitiate the serpent gods, and their offerings include gold and silver coins, and gold, silver, copper or stone effigies of snakes, grains of all kinds, pepper, salt, saffron, tender cocoanuts, bunches of Kadali plantain, melons, oil, ghee, sandalwood, silk and other pilgrims. On the day previous to the Ayilyam ceremonial, about two or three thousand Brahmans are fed. The annual expense of this institution and worship at Mannársála is estimated at about 2,000 rupees. The kávu has its own paddy fields and gardens, from the revenues of which it is maintained.

- 778 All the land about it, measuring a mile square, is said to
 • 423 belong to it. This would be enormous property, as the
 635 taluk where this kavoo is situated is one of the richest in
 Travancore. A trifle is given by the Sircar every year.
 If more funds are required, the Nambiyadi is expected to
 meet them from his own private income. The grove and
 its temples cover an immense oblong space measuring
 about 16 acres in extent. The inmates of the Illam are
 638 the poojaries of the gods in this grove. It is believed
 825 that whenever the poojah is not performed with the
 strictest personal purity or care to small details, the
 serpent gods get offended, which feeling is exhibited by
 778 the largest cobras coming out of the grove. It should be
 778 remembered that, as a rule, the serpents are not seen out
 825 of their holes, though hundreds of them are known to
 exist in these large groves. When any is seen, especially
 if a real cobra, the village astrologer is consulted,
 who readily finds out the cause of the wrath of the
 serpent gods, and steps are taken immediately to pacify
 them by propitiatory ceremonies. The people believe in
 these ceremonies most implicitly. That is not a mere
 form with them. In a house in North Travancore, where
 776 I lived some years, there used to be seen now and again
 825 snakes of all kinds, and in answer to my request to the
 servant of my landlord to keep the kavoo neat, he
 invariably said, "Please, sir, order some lights and milk
 to the kavoo," for this man most sincerely believed that
 this was the only effective way of keeping out the snakes
 from view. He did not seem to believe that there was
 any good in keeping the premises neat and clean.
 It should here be noted that a true Hindu population
 never pelt at or harm the snakes when they are
 seen. They are objects of worship. One of our retired
 officials told me that some years ago, when he was
 young and new to the place, he was puzzled by some
 of the parties present at his cutcherry telling him that the
 'god was coming.' The crowd made way, and on rising,
 this official was horrified to see that the god referred to
 was a live cobra. This village he spoke of, even now
 abounds with serpents, but strange to say, these reptiles
 825 seldom harm man. They are evidently become domesticated
 animals, for we seldom hear of snake-bites in that
 village, though the general belief is that there are more
 snakes there than rats. The people also seem to be quite
 at home with them, for they do not get put out when
 they see these reptiles."

family to compass the death of a member of the slayer's family. This custom was called *kudippaka* (literally, *house feud*), or in an abbreviated form, *kuduppu*. One curious fact connected with this custom was that the chieftain of the district intervened when a man was slain, and the body of the deceased was by him taken to his enemy's house, and the corpse and the house were burnt together. It is understood that an out-house was usually selected for this purpose, but it was a common phrase to say—

'the slain rests in the yard of the slayer.'

"Again when mortal offence was given by one man to another, a solemn contract used to be entered into before the chieftain of the locality to fight a *duel*, the chieftain himself being the umpire. Large sums (up to a thousand fanams or two hundred and fifty rupees) used to be deposited as the battle-wager, and these sums formed one source (*ankam*) of the chieftain's revenue, and the right to levy them was sometimes transferred along with other privileges appertaining to the tenure of the soil. A preparation and training (it is said) for twelve years preceded the battle in order to qualify the combatants in the use of their weapons. The men who fought were not necessarily the principals in the quarrel—they were generally their champions. It was essential that one should fall, and so both men settled all their worldly affair before the day of combat."

The origin of the duo-decimal period is obscure, but to this day it obtains in Malabar (and in Malabar only) in relation to all agricultural affairs. The land, in contradistinction to the rest of the Presidency (as a rule), is the absolute property of the landholders—the whole of Malabar is; the landholders let out their land under certain conditions for periods of twelve years. This is the ordinary period of tenure; now a days, much of the land is leased informally on a yearly tenure. Tenants must renew their right to possession of their land every twelve years. The subject of land tenure in Malabar is a very extensive one, and we will not discuss it, resting satisfied with having noted the observance of the twelve yearly cycle in connection with it. It is supposed to be governed by the cycle of Jupiter.*

* Friar Jordanus, Bishop of Quilon in the 14th century, said that people make a vow, and to fulfil it cut off their own head before an idol.

"Barbosa says that the king of Quilaene or Coliacaud (Calicut) . . . after reigning 12 years, always sacrificed himself to an idol in this way."

"Madras Manual of Administration," vol. iii, page 643.

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588 collapsed and the old system of differential land-rights between Nambūdiris and rulers on
 564 the one hand and their Nayar tenants on the other has been seriously undermined. Yet even
 178 today Nayers remark with pride that their lineage has 'fathers' in the lineages of their former
 landlords and chiefs, while chiefs and royalty alike revere their Nambūdiri *genitors*, and boast
 that the blood of these Gods of the earth is running in their veins.

PART II. THE NAYAR *Tali-Rite* IN NORTH MALABAR

131 NORTH MALABAR LIES NORTH OF THE KORA RIVER, being the old kingdoms of Kolattiri,
 133 Kurumbrattiri, and Kadattunad. Except for the coast-towns expanded by Europeans, it is
 361 sparsely populated and mountainous; part of it is forest. Villages lie separated by hill ranges,
 1635 usually as clusters of houses on the hillsides surrounding small wet paddy-flats in the valleys.
 This contrasts with South Malabar and Cochin, where the coastal plain is wider, paddy-land
 extensive, and settlement usually continuous between villages.

195 Perhaps because of its difficult environment, North Malabar did not before 1792 approach
 631 the degree of political centralization achieved in the central area. The Kolattiri Rajas, it is
 true, temporarily conquered Kottayam, Kurumbranad, and Kadattunad, but the area was
 never consolidated as was the Zomorin's kingdom. Within the small kingdoms, *nāduraris*
 628 fought each other and rebelled against their Rajas, allying themselves with different rulers
 629 as suited their needs of the moment. Neighbouring *desavaris* sometimes fought each other within
 the *nādu*, while within the *desam*, *kudipaga* (lineage-feud) persisted till modern times.

564 Consistent with this lack of political centralization, high-class Nayars were not divided
 631 into sub-castes with administrative and occupational functions. Instead they had exogamous
 613 clans, dispersed between many villages. In Kottayam and Kolattunad the bulk of Nayars
 423 were Nambiaris, independent land-owners owing only nominal allegiance to a chief. *Desavaris*,
 614 appointed by the Raja or the *nādurari*, had administrative powers in their villages but belonged
 to the same sub-caste as other Nambiaris. In most villages the land was divided between the
 Nayar property-groups as owners, Nayar tenancies being less common than in the south.
Nādurari lineages, however, usually owned the land in the whole village where they lived,
 employed Nambiar tenants as retainers, and claimed superior caste-rank, calling themselves
 Samantan Nambiaris. Nambūdiri Brahmins are fewer in the north than in the south, especi-
 ally since the Muslim invasions from Mysore in the 1760s, when many fled to Travancore.
 Those who remain live as landlords in widely separated villages, with local Nambiar lineages
 as retainers. The Nayar servant castes are spatially distributed as in the south. The lower
 polluting castes of manual workers are present in similar proportions, but *Tiyyars* and their
 washermen and barbers are matrilineal in North Malabar, patrilineal in the south.

613 The *Nayar Kinship System*. North Malabar Nayars, though trained in arms in the private
 1701 gymnasias of their lineages, were not recruited as a permanent militia of the kingdom. Instead
 566 they cultivated their own lands with the aid of *Tiyyar* tenants, the serf castes being absent over
 591 most of the area. It seems largely because of this difference of occupation, North Malabar
 613 Nayars are virilocal: a wife moves on marriage to the ancestral house of her husband,
 594 and remains with him with rare exceptions till his death. Her children are brought up by their
 582 father and commonly return to their own lineage at puberty. A boy then begins to manage
 his *taravad* property under the direction of his *kāranavan*, while a girl is shortly afterwards
 married, from the lineage house, by common consent of her *kāranavan* and her father, often to
 the *kāranavan*'s son or to a maternal nephew of the father.

586 Divorce is permitted, but is rarer than in the south. Polygyny is rare, polyandry even
 595 traditionally forbidden. A cuckolded husband formerly cut off the hair of his wife and returned
 684 her to her lineage. The *genitor* has customary rights in and obligations to his children. In
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Tiyyar

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Rajas to assist at their ceremonies. Kolattiri women married Koil Tamburan or Nambūdiri men, and Kolattiri men Samantan Nambiar or Nambiar women. In the Kadattunad lineage, which once owed fealty to Kolattiri as an ordinary chiefly lineage, the *tali* was tied by Kolattiri princes. Women of the lineage married Kolattiri or Nambūdiri men, and men, chiefly women of or village headmen's lineages of their kingdoms.

It is clear that, at least for the 'ordinary' Nambiar who married almost exclusively with each other, the *tali*-rite was no more than an initiation ceremony giving the girl the status of a married woman. It is fitting that the *tali* should not be tied by an *enagan*, for, polyandry being prohibited, the girls of a lineage were not married collectively to the local group as a whole. Since the *sambandham* union was permanent, the husband's sexual rights exclusive, and the father accorded legal, ritual, and social rights, it is difficult to explain this rite in terms of social function. It is true, of course, that like all Nayar rites it had the function of identifying the Nayers as a group with customs distinctive from those of other groups. It may also be possible to argue that it gave ritual recognition to the overlordship of Nambūdiris. It was not, however, as in South Malabar, closely in keeping with the political and economic systems, either in the kingdom or the village. Nambūdiri landlords were few, and many Nayers would have to call for the rite Nambūdiris of distant villages to whom they had no relationship as retainers.

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Similarly, the *tali*-rite in the Kolattiri lineage seems to have resulted less from the lineage's bond to the Koil Tamburans, than the reverse: for, if we are to believe informants, the Koil Tamburans were brought from Travancore expressly to perform the *tali*-rite and assist at other ceremonies of the Kolattiri lineage. I am not prepared to state that the North Malabar *tali*-rite had no other social function, since I never saw it and the evidence is incomplete. It seems, however, that certain aspects of the rite, both in north and south, cannot be explained in terms of social function but only in terms of psychological motivations. This I defer until I have discussed the place of this rite in the kinship systems of North and South Malabar Tiyyars.

PART III. THE TIYYAR KINSHIP SYSTEM AND *Tali*-RITE IN NORTH MALABAR

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THE TIYYARS FARM LAND leased on short-term tenures from Nayers and live in the low-caste quarters of the same villages. In this area they are matrilineal. Like Nayers, they were organized into *taras*, the hereditary headman (Tandan) of the *tara* being responsible to the *desavari* for the administration of caste law among Tiyyars and the lower castes.¹

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Each *tara* might contain ten to twelve Tiyyar lineages and one each of Tiyyar washermen (Vannāns, called Mannāns in the south) and barbers (Kāvutiyans, called Vāthiis in the south). The Tiyyar lineage, like the Nayar, is exogamous, is united by birth and death pollutions, the worship of a lineage goddess, and snake-worship, and is divided into property-groups each containing a sibling group together with the children and maternal grandchildren of the sisters. The Tiyyars, like the Nayers, have dispersed matrilineal exogamous clans. In this area (but not in South Malabar) Tiyyar men may hypergamously marry women of the Tiyyar barber (but not the washerman) caste.

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Tiyyars, like Nayers, are predominantly virilocal. Unlike Nayers, Tiyyar men, having little ancestral property, may remain with the father and build a house on land leased from Nayers near the father's dwelling-group. Though filiation is officially matrilineal, and children retain rights in any land or houses their matrilineal group may own, the *local* descent-group, persisting over three to four generations, is therefore often patrilineal. Polyandry is forbidden,

¹ I have no information on the *enagan* institution of North Malabar Tiyyars. Dr. Aiyappan's (1934, *passim*) discussion of the Tiyyar *enagan* system seems, from my knowledge of Tiyyars, to apply only to patrilineal Tiyyars of South Malabar. In Kottayam informants did not remember the institution which, if it existed, must have died out thirty to fifty years ago.

Nayar
Tiyyar

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language women whom they meet. At the temple they are received by young Nayar girls who sell to them a mixture of yellow turmeric powder, blessed by *mantras*, and receive in return a volley of sexual abuse. Thousands of cocks are sacrificed in the temple yard by the pilgrims as an offering to Bhagavadi who is believed to drink their blood. Hundreds of Nayar, Tiyyar, and Mannan Bhagavadi oracles from all over Malabar prance wildly in the temple courtyard in their red cloths and waist-bands of bells, madly chopping their foreheads till blood flows copiously. In the evening, at a sign from the *addutari* of Kodungalur, the chief of the Mukkuvana (a low fishing caste of the same culture as Tiyyars) begins the work of polluting the actual shrine by rushing up to it and beating the outer wall with his stick. According to Fawcett (1901 p. 245), he formally entered the shrine and defecated on the idol. The crowd of Nayar and low caste men then hurtle, shouting foul abuse, round the shrine, beat on its walls, and fling gold and filth into its interior. The festival ends at dusk when they return quietly home. The next day, the Bharani day itself, the temple is locked and deserted in fear, since it is believed that for seven days following, the foul demon attendants of the goddess are given over to depredations of the shrine and of the idol itself. On the seventh day, its priests reopen the temple, ritually purify it, and restore it to normal high caste worship again.¹

This attack on the goddess by low caste men who may not normally approach her represents, it seems likely, a sexual attack on the mother by son-figures to whom she is normally denied. In it the high caste priests (fathers) vacate the temple; the rules of purity and pollution are reversed; animal sacrifice is indulged in; women and the goddess are insulted in a manner contrary to everyday etiquette; and the Bhagavadi idol formally made the object of an anal attack. The ceremony appears to act out cathartically the incestuous phantasies of Nayar and low caste men towards their mother, and incidentally, in their obscene attack on the Nayar girls, the repressed desires of low caste men towards forbidden women of the higher castes. I suggest that in the singing of obscene songs by the washermen at a Nayar or Tiyyar puberty ceremony and the use of the barber as a kind of proxy bridegroom at the North Malabar Tiyyar *Mli-rile*, these low caste men act out similar phantasies towards higher-caste mother-figures, as well as providing the higher castes with harmless 'polluted' bridegrooms who perform the necessary but dangerous tasks associated with bringing their girls to womanhood.

Why should the Oedipal fear in these castes be so excessively strong that it is necessary ceremonially to renounce the rights in the sexuality of a natal kinswoman before her puberty, yet at the same time dangerous to be the first to receive these rights? I suggest that this is so because of the great power accorded to elders in these castes, made possible by the joint ownership of property by the lineage-segment under the legal headship of its senior man. These property-arrangements perpetuate, often until middle age, male economic and emotional dependence on the parental generation, and enforce the attitudes of reverence and masochistic submission to elders which so characterize the higher Hindu castes. This dependence on the parental generation causes male incestuous wishes to remain primarily fixed on the mother, and secondarily on other close natal kinswomen throughout life, and perpetuates the corresponding unconscious fear of male parental vengeance. It is, therefore, in male phantasy, both necessary to give away the sexual rights in natal kinswomen (who are identified with the mother as desirable but forbidden sexual objects) before they are in danger of becoming mature, yet at the same time dangerous to deflower the virgins of other lineages who, being still 'owned' by their own natal kinsmen, are also unconsciously likened

To the mother.

¹ I saw this festival in 1949. For fuller accounts see Thurston & Rangachari, (1909, V, pp. 420-05) and K. P. Padmanabha Menon (1935, IV, pp. 332-43).

and one with less than that number was called a *Désavdshi*.
 There were in those days no taxes levied from the people, and
 the chief from the Rajas down to the *Désavdshi* possessed
 demesne lands for their support which were cultivated either
 by themselves or leased to *kudiyann* or tenants; but the follow-
 ing were the chief sources of income, based upon feudal rights
 and privileges. The rulers levied custom duties upon exports
 and imports, taxes upon houses of fishermen, tradesmen and
 professional men. Criminal fines went to fill their coffers, and
 succession duties were levied upon the estates of deceased per-
 sons, especially those who held offices of State or rights over
 land. Outcast women were made a two-fold source of profit.
 Lewd adulterous women were made over to the chiefs with
 a premium for the trouble of looking after them, and the chiefs
 used in turn to sell the women to foreign merchants as slaves
 or wives to *Chettis*. The estates of persons who died without
 heirs were escheated, nor could an heir be adopted without the
 Raja's consent, for which a fee was generally levied. Protection
 fees from strangers and merchants were levied under various
 names and customary presents were the ruler's dues on occa-
 sions of feast or funeral. Wrecks were his perquisites, and
 various animals his monopoly. Concerning the former, Marco
 Polo wrote about the kingdom of Eli, "And you must know
 that if any ship enters the estuary and anchors when she
 has been bound for some other port, they seize her and
 plunder the cargo. They say that you are bound some-
 where else, and it is God that sent you hither to us, so we
 have a right to all your goods, and think it no sin to act
 thus. This naughty custom prevails all over the Provinces
 of India, to wit, that if a ship be driven by a stress of
 weather into some other port than that to which it is bound, it
 is sure to be plundered. But if a ship came bound originally
 to the place, they received it with all honour and gave it
 protection." The custom of the taking of ships and cargoes
 lasted down to recent times, until the English factory at Telli-
 cherry entered into agreements with three of the country-
 powers for the exemption of English vessels from such seizures.

Among the animals that became the property of the Raja
 were cows with three or five dugs, cattle that has killed a man
 or other animals, cattle with a white spot near the corner of

*433 50 per cent higher than at the all-India level. Agricultural crops and the plantations, which form the main component of the primary sector, are largely produced for the market and are the basic factors responsible for imparting a high level of productivity to this sector.

241 1.26 Agriculture in the State is characterized by a high value yielding cropping pattern, good physical yields, a high intensity of cropping and superior cultivation techniques. During 1956-57 the intensity of cropping¹ was 119 per cent (all-India—113%). However, if field crops alone are taken into account, the cropping intensity shoots up to 150 per cent. It is the latter percentage which is the more relevant one, since the area covered by the perennial crops is irrelevant from the point of view of double or triple cropping. All these factors combine to make the agricultural sector of Kerala highly productive, the average level of agricultural output per net cultivated acre in Kerala being about Rs. 360 against Rs. 125 for the whole of India.

245 1.27 Kerala owes the superiority of its cropping pattern to the large number of high value yielding plantation crops grown in the State. Coconuts, the most important among these, occupy about 20 per cent of the gross cropped area and yield Rs. 450 per acre on an average. Other cash crops in the order of their importance in terms of area covered are pepper, rubber, arecanut, tea, cashewnut, cardamom, and coffee. Taken as a whole, they cover approximately 40 per cent of the gross cropped area.

*433 1.28 Apart from the high productivity aspect of the plantation crops, they are of significance to the economy from two other angles. First, these crops provide the raw material for some of the key industries of the State. Coir making, the most important industry of the State, utilizes the outer husks of the coconuts. Similarly, cashewnut industry, the second most important industry of Kerala, also draws its raw material from the agricultural sector. Besides these, Kerala holds almost a complete all-India monopoly in the production of rubber, which is another important industrial raw material. Secondly, plantation crops derive their prominence from the fact that a large number of crops grown in Kerala find a good export market and are, therefore, very good foreign exchange earners.

*433 1.29 One other feature of the Kerala economy which owes its origin to the agricultural sector may also be pointed out. Unlike the rest of India, where barter trade is still prevalent on a significant scale in the rural areas, Kerala economy is highly monetized. The large number of cash crops grown in the State are all brought to the market for sale. Secondly, since a high percentage of food requirements are obtained from the other parts of India, they are again channelled through the market. A high degree of commercialization of Kerala economy is one of the factors responsible for absorption of a large section of the population in the tertiary sector.

241 1.30 Otherwise agriculture in Kerala carries with it all the disquieting features common to Indian agriculture. The pressure of population on land is even severer here. The average size of holdings in Kerala has dwindled down to 1.5 acres

¹ Intensity of cropping is the ratio between gross cropped area and net sown area. It gives the degree to which a given piece of land is utilized.

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against the all-India average of 7.5 acres; and over 60 per cent of the landholdings in Travancore-Cochin area are less than one acre in size. 241
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1.31 The high pressure of population also reveals itself in an urge to push along the margin of cultivable area as far as possible. This is shown by the fact that the proportion of net sown area (45.25 lakh acres) to total area of the State was as high as 47.16 per cent against 39 per cent for the whole of India in 1956. The higher proportion assumes even a greater significance in view of the fact that forests cover over 25 per cent of the total area of Kerala (all-India—18%). 311

1.32 The agricultural labourers form a very high proportion of the agricultural population (Kerala 39%: India 17.5%), and the extent of under-employment among them is also one of the highest in India. The number of days of employment per agricultural labourer in Kerala was only 170 days per year¹, the lowest in the whole of India. 162
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1.33 A deterioration in the position of the agricultural labourers is shown by the decline in the average annual income of agricultural labour households between 1951 and 1957. As can be seen from the table below, the average annual income of an agricultural labourer's household in Kerala declined from Rs. 486 in 1951 to Rs. 437 in 1956. This is a much steeper decline than observed in the case of the whole of India, presumably due to a higher rate of growth of population in Kerala than in India. 434
178

AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME OF AGRICULTURAL LABOUR HOUSEHOLDS [17]

	Kerala (Rs.)	India (Rs.)
1950-51	486	447
1956-57	437	437

SOURCE: Second Report of the Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee. [113]

Consumption Pattern

1.34 The level of consumption expenditure per head is a good indicator of the standard of living prevailing in any region. Table 5² gives a comparative picture of the pattern of consumption expenditure for the rural areas of Travancore-Cochin and India. As may be seen, the average monthly consumption expenditure in Kerala (Rs. 18.64) is lower than that in all-India (Rs. 21.44), indicating a somewhat lower standard of living in the State. 577
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1.35 The break-up of total expenditure into different items of consumption reveals some interesting points. The expenditure on foodgrains, milk and milk products is not only absolutely lower in Kerala but even as a proportion of total expenditure, it is considerably below the all-India average. On the other hand, meat, egg, fish and 'other food' absorb quite a high proportion of consumption expenditure in Kerala. These differences reflect the relative scarcity of foodgrains 511
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[171]

¹ Report of the Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee. [113]

² The data is compared for Travancore-Cochin and India (1952) because figures for Kerala State are not available. However, the conclusions are likely to be broadly true of Kerala also.

[See p 272, Category 116 -- Analysis]

Chapter 2

Agriculture and Plantation Crops

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

161 A NUMBER of distinctive features are characteristic of the agricultural sector of Kerala.
 241 In the first place, Kerala surpasses all other regions of India in respect of the high pressure of population on land. Secondly, on account of the large number of valuable cash crops, the agricultural sector is more commercialized in the State than elsewhere. Thirdly, food production has always been far short of Kerala's requirements.

311 2.2 With the fast rising density of population, the margin of cultivation has been
 423 constantly receding. The proportion of net sown area to total geographical area is
 191 consequently much higher in Kerala (47.16%) than in the rest of India (all-India : 39.1%). The average size of land-holdings, however, is much smaller (1.5 acres) in Kerala (all-India : 7.5 acres). In the Travancore-Cochin area, 66 per cent of the holdings are below one acre in size. (Table 7)²

464 2.3 The scarcity of land in relation to population has been responsible for an
 241 acute state of unemployment and under-employment among the people in the rural
 [171] areas. Unemployment is about three to four times higher in Kerala than in the rest of India. The acute state of unemployment is also accounted for by Kerala's cropping pattern which is comparatively less labour absorbing than in many other parts of India. The perennial crops which take up 47 per cent of the cultivated area need labour recurrently only for maintenance and harvesting¹ although crops like tea and rubber require human labour on a large scale for picking of the green leaves and tapping of rubber. The perennial crops require very little labour for basic operations such as preparation of seed bed, sowing, etc., except once in their life time.

* 433 2.4 However, the fact that the cropping pattern of Kerala is not labour-intensive
 241 is compensated to some extent by the higher value yield of the perennial crops per
 434 cultivated acre. The soil structure and climatic conditions in Kerala favour a high value yielding cropping pattern. On an average, cash crops contribute Rs. 100 crores (65%) to the income from agriculture (Rs. 151 crores). Of the cash crops, coconuts occupy 20.2 per cent of gross cropped area, standing next only to paddy which occupies 35.8 per cent of the gross cropped area. But the value yielded per acre for coconuts (Rs. 446) is more than twice that for paddy (Rs. 212). The position regarding the other crops is given in Table 9.²

* 433 2.5 In respect of plantation crops the only other State which approaches closest
 241 to Kerala is Assam where the proportion of cultivable area devoted to plantation

¹ This aspect is discussed in greater detail in the Chapter on Manpower No. 11.

² [See p. 273, cat. 116 -- Analyst] 20

³ [See p. 275, cat. 116 -- Analyst]

AGRICULTURE AND PLANTATION CROPS

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Since this is a matter of all-India policy, the State Government should press the Central Government for an early action on this. 433*
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2.100 Tea estate lands are leased to growers by the Government. Most estates hold lands in considerable excess of areas which actually bear tea. Government should compel the lessees to undertake planting tea in all the suitable areas; failing this, the surplus lands may be taken back from the lessors by the Government.

2.101 A programme of replantation of at least 10,000 acres per year would be necessary during the Third and Fourth Plan periods, specially to compensate for the past neglect. Fresh leases need not be granted for this purpose as there are vast uncropped areas adjacent to tea estates in the areas already leased. Pressure, inducement, incentives in the form of replantation loans and the supply of materials may be employed to achieve the desired results. Estimates of cost of bringing an acre up to the bearing stage vary from Rs. 2,150 to Rs. 3,650 per acre. Adopting the estimate of the Tea Planters Association at Rs. 2,500 per acre, the total investment necessary to raise 10,000 acres of new plantings per year for the next 10 years would be of the order of Rs. 25 crores.

2.102 *Size of the Plantations:* In 1957, there were 282 estates in Kerala. The average size of tea gardens in the State is 350 acres. However, about 50 per cent of the estates were less than 200 acres in area. For economic functioning of a tea estate, it is necessary to have a modern tea processing unit (generally known as a tea factory) attached to the garden. Different estimates show that to be an economic unit, a tea factory needs 822,000 lbs. (about 10,000 maunds) of green leaves a year and to produce this quantity anywhere from 250 to 300 acres of tea acreage would be needed. If this is accepted as a norm, it may be said that about half the tea estates in Kerala are uneconomic. This is indeed a serious problem, since the economic functioning of an estate as well as the quality of tea produced depends on the size and the type of processing machinery employed. An increase in the size of all the plantations with an area below 250 acres is necessary. Long term replantation loans and fresh leases of land, if available, are suggested as measures to correct the existing imbalance. 423

Rubber

2.103 Kerala holds almost complete monopoly in the sphere of rubber production in the country. Kottayam has the largest concentration of rubber acreage in India. During 1958, Kerala produced 22,159 tons of rubber valued at Rs. 7.69 crores, out of a total all-India production of 25,000 tons. The rubber plantations also employ a large labour force of approximately 80,000 persons. 433*
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2.104 Soil, climate and other natural conditions found in Kerala are quite well suited to the growth of rubber plants except that rainfall is not as well distributed over the year as in some other rubber growing areas of the world, such as Malaya and Ceylon. This factor has had a somewhat adverse effect on the yields, which might otherwise have been higher than the present level of 294 lbs. per acre. [132]

2.105 During the last decade there has been a sharp increase in the area under rubber. Between 1951 and 1958 it increased by 90 per cent, that is, from 141,760

*433 acres to 270,625 acres. This is a proof of the growing popularity of rubber cultivation
249 in Kerala. Increase has also been registered in the tapped area. During 1951-56, the tapped area increased by about 50 per cent (99,120 to 150,000 acres), though the acreage under rubber increased only by 25 per cent. A higher rate of increase in case of tapped area has been caused by maturing of trees planted before 1951.

*433 2.106 *Distribution of Holdings*: The increase in the number of holdings since
249 1951 has been much more than the increase in acreage under rubber. There were 50,000 estates in 1958 as against 9,026 in 1951. The increase was roughly 500 per cent as against an increase in the area by about 100 per cent only. The consequence is that today rubber industry in Kerala is marked by the existence of a large number of small-size family estates. The increase in area under small estates is not a healthy trend, as these are uneconomic and have low productivity.

*433 2.107 *Production and Yields*: During 1958, the total production of rubber in
249 Kerala was 22,200 tons. The production has been steadily rising at a rate of 8.2 per cent per annum which is indeed a very high rate when compared with growth in the gross agricultural production. (Table 13)*

[171] 2.108 In 1958 the yield per acre of rubber in Kerala was 294 lbs. which is very low when compared to the yields in Malaya, Ceylon, Indonesia and other rubber growing countries. Compared to 1958, the yield in 1951 was slightly higher standing at 312 lbs. per acre. The decline in yield was partly due to the transfer of Kanyakumari district, which was a high yielding region, to Madras after the reorganization of the States. Partly it was also due to large scale new planting in all the districts except Trichur.

2.109 A significant fact about land productivity is the wide difference in yield rates between big and small estates. In 1958, the average yield of holdings of below 100 acres was only 162 lbs. per acre while in larger holdings it was 486 lbs.

*433 2.110 Low productivity in smaller gardens is due to the inefficient and unscientific
249 manner in which the estates are managed and lack of resources at the disposal of these estate owners. Scientific and efficient management of rubber gardens requires manuring of gardens, periodic renewal of fences, clearance of under-growth, control of soil erosion, etc. For carrying out these operations, it is necessary to have a large fund of working capital which the small growers do not possess. Small growers, particularly those with 10 acres and less, have very little sustaining power and cannot wait for the trees to attain maturity. Consequently, premature tappings and slaughter tappings are too common among the small estates. The small holders are also tempted to grow an understorey when the plants are young and for that they generally prefer tapioca as it is a food crop with high yields. Under cropping even when properly manured, is not good for the soil but when it is considered along with inadequate manuring, the harm can well be imagined. This type of mismanagement generally does not occur in large plantations. It is high time that something is done to improve the situation. Measures such as amalgamating small units into an economic size and working them on a cooperative basis would perhaps meet the needs. The matter should be further investigated and followed up by suitable action.

2.111 The low yield per acre is also due to the cultivation of low yielding varieties and over-ageing of trees. The Rubber Board reported that at the end of 1955, 80

See p. 278, category 116 -- Analysis

to a considerable degree in Malabar and Nelliampathi (Travancore-Cochin) areas. The major concentration of area occurs in the Kozhikode district of Malabar. It had 89 per cent of the total coffee area in the State during 1957-58. Between 1955 and 1958, coffee production in Malabar rose (18%) while that in Travancore-Cochin declined (16%). Similarly, the area under coffee during the same period registered an increase in Malabar (28.3%) but declined in Travancore-Cochin region (15.0%).

2.134 The average yield per acre of coffee in Kerala is rather low. It has been lower than the all-India average and is far below the average yield in Mysore, the principal coffee growing State in India, (1955-56 Kerala, 285 lbs. per acre; all-India, 369 lbs. per acre; and Mysore 395 lbs. per acre). Moreover, while the yields elsewhere in India, especially in Mysore, have been rising, in Kerala they have fallen from 368 to 285 lbs. per acre during 1951-58. Within Kerala, the yields are the highest in Kozhikode district which is largely due to the better management of estates in this district.

2.135 One of the characteristics of coffee plantations in Kerala is the overwhelmingly large number of small estates. In 1958, there were 14,475 registered estates with a total area of 47,675 acres. Of these, 12,412 were of less than five acres in size. There were only 99 estates out of 14,475 with an area over 50 acres. (Table 14)

2.136 There is a distinct relationship between the size of coffee estates and the output per acre. It is noticed that yields increase progressively as the size of the estates increases. The yield per acre of *Arabica* variety in estates in the size group of 5-10 acres was 0.68 cwt. per acre, while for the estates with 200 acres or more, it was 2.26 cwt. Moreover, the quality of coffee produced on small plantations is also inferior and fetches only 65 per cent of the price of coffee produced on big estates. It is difficult to ascertain the most economic size but it is believed that for effective and profitable functioning, the minimum size would be 50 acres. If this is accepted, then only less than one per cent of coffee estates in Kerala are economic. The question of making these plantations economic through consolidation or extension of area under coffee plantations should, therefore, receive serious attention. Two more points need attention. First, new areas should be planted with coffee *Arabica* rather than coffee *Robusta* since the former gives higher yields. Secondly, as in the case of tea, replantation is also over-due in the coffee plantations. Remedies on the same lines as suggested for tea hold good for coffee also.

2.137 Unlike tea, the major portion of which is exported, coffee plantations are subordinated largely by the demand for internal consumption. Internal demand, however, has not been keeping pace with rise in the output of coffee. At present India has quite a large surplus in coffee and efforts are being made to export the surplus. In spite of an enormous surplus of coffee in South America, efforts in India have yielded good results as shown by an increase in exports from 3,000 tons in 1952-53 to 15,228 tons in 1956-57.¹ Most of our exports go to East European countries. There is scope for stepping up the exports further, in spite of the world

¹ Source: Coffee Board, Bangalore.

2 [see p. 279, category 11b--Analysis]

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therefore, does not look attractive to the growers. In addition, in some parts where rubber can be grown, cashew is being slowly replaced by rubber, the latter being more profitable. Under these circumstances, since there is no incentive for farmers either to resort to intensive methods of cultivation or to extend the area under cashew-nuts, it may not be possible to achieve any significant increase in their output within Kerala. There may, however, be some scope in Cannanore district, for not more than 10,000 acres. Most of this area would be on Government lands under the jurisdiction of Forest and Land Revenue Departments. It is suggested that the proposed plantation should be from clonal progenies of selected parent trees.

2.143 Assuming that 10,000 acres of land is available for cashew planting, total investment necessary to plant this area during 1961-71, at the rate of Rs. 100 per acre, would be Rs. 10 lakhs. The major extension of area under cashewnuts, however, will have to take place in the other States of India, mainly, Andhra Pradesh, Madras and Orissa.

Arecanut

2.144 Arecanut is an important cash crop of Kerala. The State possesses about 50 per cent of total arecanut area in the country. Arecanut is a high value as well as a labour intensive crop. [423]

2.145 The total production of arecanut in the country is about 25 lakh maunds, which falls short of requirements by about one-third. This is made good by imports from Pakistan, Malaya and other countries. The need for conserving foreign exchange resources of India brings out the importance of increasing the production of arecanut.

2.146 Short term as well as long term measures are necessary to raise the output of arecanut. Short term measures are needed to effect a quick increase in the production. Long term measures are necessary for sustaining the gains achieved through short term measures as well as for effecting a progressive increase in the output over a longer period. Adequate manuring, irrigation, and prevention and control of diseases are some of the short term measures, while under-planting or filling in and extending area under the crop are the long term measures. [242]

2.147 Considerable scope exists for raising the output of arecanut by providing irrigation in summer months. It is found that some of the well-managed irrigated gardens yield over Rs. 6,000 worth of produce annually as against Rs. 700 to 800 in unirrigated gardens. At present about 50 per cent of the arecanut area is solely dependent on monsoon rains and only about 25 per cent of the area receives adequate irrigation. Provision of irrigation facilities to arecanut gardens is; therefore, a prime necessity. Since the crop is grown scattered in the valleys and in patches on hill slopes and on small holdings, the irrigation development so far has not benefited the arecanut area to any extent. It is, therefore, suggested that the State should aid arecanut farms by granting long term loans for sinking wells and for the purchase of pumping sets. The gardens being mostly small, it may not be possible for individual garden owners to fully utilize the well and the machinery. This difficulty may perhaps be surmounted by organizing irrigation cooperatives for arecanut gardens. 433* 245 241

FORESTS

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SOME FORESTRY PROBLEMS

Acquisition of Private Forests

4.20 It has been mentioned that forests of Kerala are one of the best managed ones. But this is true only of the reserved forests under Government jurisdiction. In the Malabar area there are about 5 lakh acres of private forests which are maintained very unsatisfactorily. Unlike the reserved forests, there is no adequate protective staff for the care of these forests and no attention is paid to their regeneration or management on scientific lines. This has naturally resulted in an unwarranted depletion of forest wealth in the private forest areas. In the interests of adequate preservation of forest wealth, immediate steps are necessary to acquire the private forests and bring them within unified forest management under the control of the Forest Department. A provision for acquiring the private forests was made during the Second Plan but their acquisition could not be carried out. This must be effected during the Third Plan period. 313 423

The Problem of Encroachment

4.21 There is one other disquieting feature about forests in Kerala. Such is the pressure of population in the State that inroads are being made into the forest areas, especially where forests occur in the midland region. This has taken the form of Government deforestation of forest areas in the interests of Grow More Food Campaign. In addition, there have also been illicit encroachments and these areas are still under cultivation, although the State Government have declared them to be revertible. The extent of these areas is not very large compared to the total area under forests. About 9,750 acres fall within the former category and 16,500 acres belong to the category of revertible areas. The gravity of the encroachment situation arises from the fact that in case a lenient view is taken, these will prove a serious menace to proper maintenance of forest potential in the long run. 137 311

Regeneration of Evergreen Forests

4.22 The problems referred to above were of an administrative nature; but forestry in Kerala is faced with one or two urgent technical problems as well. One of these is to find out some way of inducing adequate regeneration of the evergreen species. 313

4.23 Of late a number of evergreen species have found new uses in the manufacture of plywood logs, railway sleepers, telegraph poles, etc., and these species have all come into prominence. Full potential of the existing evergreen forests cannot, however, be tapped since their natural regeneration takes time. The forest department has, therefore, got to keep control over the working of these forests.

4.24 In case of some species because of difficulties connected with regeneration, there has been a shortage of supply. The problem of regeneration of these forests is intimately connected with the problem of light. Regeneration requires light to

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AVAILABILITY OF SURPLUS BAMBOO RESOURCES

Name of Division	Government Forests		Private Forests	
	Area in acres	Field in tons of air-dry bamboos	Area in acres	Field in tons of air-dry bamboos
Wynad	18,667	38,347	..	..
Kozhikode	20,045	61,479	14,753	32,391
Nilambur	18,863	46,336	20,908	24,015
Palaghat	3,090	8,634	2,800	5,586
Nemmara	6,800	18,054	23,460	81,361
Total	67,467	172,878	64,100	143,353

SOURCE: Department of Forests, Kerala.

384 4.33 Out of the above surplus, it was recently agreed to supply 1,60,000 tons to M/s Gwalior Rayons for setting up a Rayon factory. They have also been promised an additional 1,00,000 tons when the factory is in full production. The latter amount could only be made available after the private forests have been acquired by the Government. No extraction has so far been started owing to the flowering that has taken place over a wide area in the forests.

4.34 On the basis of the above estimate of available and committed supplies, there still remains a balance of about 56,000 tons which could be utilized as raw material for paper manufacture. However, the paper mill project can be undertaken only after full regeneration in the flowered areas has taken place.¹

4.35 During this interval it would be advisable to undertake surveys of other bamboo-bearing areas in the Travancore-Cochin area. At the same time efforts should be made to divert a part of bamboo at present being utilized for local requirements to industry. Far too high a proportion (about 66%) is being utilized for non-industrial uses.

313 4.36 (ii) *Eta* Reed Resources: The two reeds *Ochlandra travancorica* and *Ochlandra Rheedi* occur in forests of the State. These reeds are at present being supplied under a concession granted to Punalur Paper Mills Ltd. The reeds in these coupes flowered from 1953-57 and, consequently, the Punalur Mill is getting only about 5,000 tons of reeds from the allotted coupes against their annual requirements of 25,000 tons of green reeds. After full generation takes place in the flowered area, the available supply of eta reeds would be roughly 30,000 tons. The surplus of 25,000 tons may be utilized by the Punalur Paper Mills which is planning to double its present capacity during the Third Plan.

433 4.37 (iii) *Minor Forest Produce*: A large number of medicinal plants exist in the State. But the potential is hardly being utilized. Against a gross revenue of Rs. 3.1 crores from the forests, minor forest produce was responsible for only Rs. 5.2 lakhs, that is, 1.7 per cent. This is unlike the neighbouring States of Mysore and Madras where minor forest produce contributed a substantial part of the revenue. A phyto-chemical plant is being set up at Neriamangalam. It will require a large

¹ Further details of a paper factory are discussed in the Chapter on Industries.

India urban participation rate, in case of rural participation rate, the difference is almost 8 per cent. 162
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11.12 As a general rule the difference between rural and urban participation rates is about 6 to 7 per cent. In Kerala, however, this difference narrows down to 1.3 per cent. This is primarily due to an abnormally low rural participation rate, the causes for which are analyzed below. [369]

11.13 It was mentioned earlier that the population of Kerala has a very high proportion of females and that this is particularly marked in the working age group. Since the proportion of females taking part in economic activity is generally less than that of males, this difference being particularly marked in Kerala (Table 57), it naturally tends to pull down the participation rates.

11.14 The participation rate in the lower ranges of age is very much influenced by the proportion of school-going children. It is well known that the standards of primary education in Kerala are the highest in the whole of India. About 18 per cent of population attends schools and colleges against only 8.31 per cent in the whole of India. This is an important factor in reducing the rural participation rate. [821]

11.15 The size of working force is also a function of the opportunities available for work. The agricultural sector of Kerala is highly over-populated, the size of average holdings being only 1.5 acres (all-India 7.5 acres). Moreover, due to the predominance of perennial crops, cropping pattern in Kerala is much less labour-intensive than in the other parts of India.¹ That the agricultural sector of Kerala is comparatively less labour-absorbing is confirmed by the very low participation rate in the agricultural sector of Kerala in comparison to the non-agricultural sector. (Table 57). These are some of the factors limiting the scope for gainful employment in the rural areas. [423]

Past Trend

11.16 The table below gives an indication of the trend of the general participation rate as indicated from the last three Census operations: 161
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TREND IN PARTICIPATION RATE—1931, 1941 AND 1951

	Population Density	Participation Rate ^a (In per cent)	Total Population (In lakhs)
1931	634	48.0	93.2
1941	737	36.6	110.37
1951	905	36.1	135.6

^aThese figures have to be used with reservations since the concepts in successive Censuses were different. However, suitable modifications have been made to make them broadly comparable.

N.B.: Population density and population figures are for Kerala, while participation rate figures are only for Travancore-Cochin.

¹ Chapter on Agriculture and Plantations.

11.20 As a general rule one associates a high proportion of working force engaged in non-agricultural activities with a high level of industrial development. However, the structure of industries and income contributed by industries¹ do not bear out this contention. Moreover, the Census of 1951 shows that 75 per cent of the non-agricultural population lives in the rural areas. This only goes to prove that the major part of non-agricultural activity is not organized on the lines of modern large scale industry but is composed of occupations more allied to agriculture which are located in the rural areas. 162 464 433

11.21 Two factors, which have already been referred to in a different context, seem to be responsible for this peculiar type of occupational structure. These are:

- (i) *Predominance of Perennial Crops*: Over 40 per cent of gross cropped area is covered by these crops (all-India 10%). Since these crops, once they are sown, require comparatively little labour for looking after them, tend to reduce the proportion of working force to the population engaged in agricultural activities. 241
- (ii) *Small Size of Holdings*: Super-imposed upon this is the fact that the average size of holdings in Kerala is very small. This tends to push people away from agricultural to non-agricultural avocations. Coir industry, which is mostly located in the rural areas, is an important example of such non-agricultural occupations. 423 288

Changes in Occupational Structure

11.22 Between the Census of 1931 and 1951 population dependent upon agriculture increased from 34.2 per cent to 53.84 per cent. It brings out one fact quite clearly. Although the non-agricultural sector is quite large in terms of its existing employment potential, it has not been dynamic enough to grow at a rate sufficiently large to absorb the growing population. One other consequence of a growing reliance on agriculture, in spite of the congestion already existing there, is the rising proportion of agricultural labourers to total population. Cultivation of owned land cannot be expected to provide a reasonable source of livelihood for all the rural population, when as high as 50 per cent of family holdings are less than one acre in size. The proportion of agricultural labourers to total population, therefore, increased from 12.5 per cent in 1931 to 20.16 per cent in 1951. 423

PART II: PROSPECTS OF EMPLOYMENT

LABOUR FORCE AND UNEMPLOYMENT

11.23 Some indication has already been given of the high degree of unemployment prevailing in the economy of Kerala. Before proceeding to make a quantitative assessment of the extent of unemployment, it is desirable to clarify the definition of 464

¹ Chapter 9, Industries—Structure and Growth.

² Chapter 1 and Chapter 2.

TABLES

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TABLE 6

VALUATION OF FOREIGN EXPORTS FROM THE PORTS OF COCHIN, ALLEPPEY AND CALCUT
(Rs. lakhs)

439

Some important commodities of export	1953-54	1954-55	1955-56	1956-57*	1957-58
Cardamom	22.44	32.84	30.17	34.84	33.90
Cashew(kernels and liquids)	927.33	1,014.32	1,155.12	1,112.02	1,141.82
Coffee	72.39	82.88	93.69	76.50	90.73
Coir and Coir Products	804.00	731.37	856.86	878.09	704.87
Fish and Prawns	102.69	79.34	31.85	123.86	149.33
Ginger	27.94	33.24	58.71	61.40	39.23
Metals, Minerals, Ores	21.56	22.78	28.93	77.10	60.77
Lemon grass oil	72.62	104.73	130.65	147.00	138.41
Pepper	962.13	569.81	378.61	341.69	295.67
Tea	1,912.96	2,196.86	1,992.17	1,974.75	2,434.78
Others	235.72	443.83	591.64	525.75	491.40
Total Value of Foreign Exports	5,163	6,312	5,389	6,313	6,603
Total Value of Exports to Ports of India	2,238	2,193	2,439	2,404	2,318
Value of Total Exports	7,400	7,505	7,828	7,747	7,921

*Value of exports from Calicut includes exports to both foreign and Indian ports.

Source: *Economic Review of Kerala*, 1959.

TABLE 7

CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF NUMBER OF HOLDINGS AND LAND AREA
OF HOLDINGS IN TRIVANCORE-COCHIN AREA AND THE MALABAR DISTRICT

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Grade of holdings	Travancore-Cochin		Malabar	
	No. of holdings	Area	No. of holdings	Area
Up to 1 acre	66.72	16.49	28.91	2.43
Up to 2.50 acres	86.47	36.96	31.32	8.22
Up to 5 acres	94.84	57.07	69.55	17.68
Up to 10 acres	98.35	73.35	83.79	32.30
Up to 20 acres	99.30	83.59	93.91	52.58
Up to 40 acres	99.86	90.15	97.88	68.57
Up to 100 acres	..	..	99.62	82.57
All	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: *Kerala 1959: An Economic Review*, Government of Kerala (1960).

TABLE 14
THE NUMBER OF REGISTERED COFFEE ESTATES ACCORDING TO SIZE AND AREA AS ON THE 31ST JULY 1958
(Area in acres)

District	Below 5 acres		5 to 10		10 to 25		25 to 50		50 to 100		100 to 200		250 to 200		200 to 250		250 and above		Total	
	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area
Malabar	9,121	16,187	1,123	4,936	515	4,956	62	2,272	46	2,965	10	1,218	8	1,293	6	1,336	14	5,650	10,505	40,813
Kottayam	3,130	3,596	185	56	58	57	14	343	5	323	1	139	1	150	..	1	703	3,393	5,367	
Cochin	5	..	2	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1	125	3	561	2	1	330	15	1,016	
Quilon	147	N.A.	2	N.A.	..	30	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	149	50	

TABLES

Source: Eighteenth Annual Report, 1957-58, Vol. IV., Coffee Board.

[113]

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POLYANDRY OF THE THANDANS, KAMMALANS, ETC.

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as ginger and chillies, palm sugar, mangoes and bananas, betel leaf, tea and coffee. There are two main paddy (unhusked rice) harvests, the *kanni* in September and until November, depending on the type of rice planted and where, and the *magaram* in January and February. 105
241

A system of land-tenure and tenancy very special to Kerala is in existence in the state and its principal characteristics may be summed up as follows. Freehold land owners are called *janmis* and they are entitled to the absolute proprietorship of the land; they may mortgage or lease it to anyone as they wish. They are themselves nearly always non-cultivating. The first kind of tenure to which they may resort is called *kanam* and he who holds the lease is known as the *kanamdar*. This is a curious type of arrangement between landlord and tenant, by which the latter deposits a certain sum with the *janmi*, who in return pays interest on the amount as if it were a loan. The *kanamdar* then has the right to work the land or to lease it out to someone else. Every year he pays rent, an adjusted sum as the interest received from the landlord is deducted. Once every twelve years, a so-called renewal fee is paid by the tenant equal to three times the annual rent, and this gives him the right of possession for a further twelve years. Should he wish to give up the lease, the original deposit will be returned to him by the *janmi*. Most *kanamdars* sub-let and do not cultivate the land themselves. 105
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The *kanamdars* often lease out the land as a *kanam* tenure too; but if they do not, it is as a *verumpattam* lease that they do so. This is a simple affair held for one year at a time, by which the tenant pays a fixed rent, or for several years, in which case it is called a customary *verumpattam*, and a renewal fee then becomes necessary, payable between five and twelve years. This lease is used only for paddy fields. Tenants of this category often sub-lease in the same way to others, who cultivate the land either themselves, or, more usually, employ labourers to do so. These labourers are of two kinds, free and tied. The former are coolies hiring themselves out for wages, while the others are agrarian farmhands who receive only board, lodging and clothing from the master responsible for them. 104
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Customary *verumpattam* tenure of palm gardens for the production of coconuts or arecanuts is called *kuzhikannam*. The twelve year renewal fee is equal to the amount made on the garden in the last year and a half of the lease. Virgin and waste land, which nevertheless always has a *janmi* somewhere, is also let out on this type of tenure. The land owner has the right to evict the tenant if he has made no improvement of the land during his period of lease. House-sites occupied by tenants 104

105 also have to be paid for, if they do not wish to be summarily evicted by
427 a land owner who simply tolerates their settling down on his land. This
is an ordinary lease, like a *verumpattam*, but is called a *kudiyiruppu*.

Tenants were formerly at a great disadvantage vis a vis the *janmi*, as the latter was at liberty to evict them on the slightest pretext. The Malabar Tenancy Act of 1930, by protecting the tenant, and restricting the cases in which eviction is possible (such as the non-payment of rent for instance, or necessity for the land owner to have some land to cultivate himself), especially of the *kanamdar*, has made this a thing of the past. Dissatisfaction with the existing conditions of land ownership and land-tenure continues, however, and the present tendency goes so far as to want to protect the interests of the *verumpattam* tenants to the detriment of the *kanamdars* and *janmis* and even, in the last resort as we shall see, of the landless, agrarian labourers who constitute the vast army of the Kerala agrarian proletariat.

105 It is difficult to generalize about the distribution of agricultural roles
423 and interests among the various castes and communities in the state.
564 Schematically, it can be said, however, that generally Nambudri Brahmins are *janmis*, since, as mythology has it, Parasu Raman gave them the land in perpetual enjoyment. Commenting on this, one of my interpreters assured me that this was not mere idle belief. It was a fact, giving the Brahmins an unequivocal title to the land, in spite of there being "no legal document" confirming them in their ownership. Many Nayars, including Kshattriyas such as the rajas of Cochin and Travancore, Samantans such as the Zamorin, and some Tiyaas and Moplas, are also owners of large tracts of land.

105 *Kanamdars* are usually recruited among the well-to-do Nayars and
564 Tiyaas, but also among the big Mopla families. Other Moslems are
427 *verumpattam* tenants, as are the majority of the Tiyaas. These of course
1093 used to follow their traditional profession of *toddy* (fermented palm
563 juice) tapping, but with the introduction of prohibition in the former
564 Madras State, they have had to give it up, and mainly hire themselves out as labourers. Others who have always hired themselves out in this way, as an immemorial caste occupation, are the Cherumas and Pulayas, some free, but the vast majority tied to the land. Many Moplas, also, have no other means of subsistence.

105 The aboriginals in Kerala continue their wild life of beggars, food-
563 gatherers or primitive forest-clearers and agriculturalists. Some are ad-
463 dicted to witchcraft as are also members of some of the artisan castes,
1054 and their activities give Kerala a strange, mysterious atmosphere of im-
ponderable evil, the reputation of which is great
outside its boundaries.

POLYANDRY OF THE THANDANS, KAMMALANS, ETC.

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We still had time that afternoon, to drive back into the village of Perumpillav and to interview some more polyandrous Tiyas. We drove to a Tiya house to have a talk with a man, a woman and a boy who confirmed to us that they belonged to families practising polyandry. 595*

The man was called Tami; he was fifty six years old and worked as a coolie. He had the *Kudiyiruppu* lease of a house for which he paid three rupees a year to a Mopla, Melethil Kunyuni Haidaros. The latter was himself the *verumpattamdar* of a *janmi* called Cheralayam Nambidi. (I was unable to find out if he was a Brahmin, an Ambalavasi or a Samantan; with the title *Nambidi* which he bore, he could have been any one of the three, but I suspect that he was a Brahmin, as this is the caste which owns the land in north Cochin.) [115] [427] [423]

Tami's household name was Kanadiwalapil, which was also that of his *tarawad*. He and his brother, Narayan, were married to Chidu, alias Sri Devi, a woman now aged fifty. The younger brother was his junior by twenty one years and had been married as second husband to their common wife when he was only five years old. There were five children, of whom the two eldest were girls, now married off elsewhere. All the boys were unmarried, and worked with their fathers as coolies. 595* 601

I found the informant extremely difficult to question. He was continually contradicting himself, and pretended that he knew no names nor ages. Thus I was unable to discover the name of his wife's *tarawad*, how many children his second daughter had had, and the ages of his two eldest sons, Velu and Kutun. I give the genealogy as I struggled to make it, in Table 7, but I fear that it is sadly incomplete and perhaps not even reliable. It was nevertheless of interest to find out something, however little, from a Tiya polyandrous labourer. [115]

We next turned to the woman. She was accompanied by her twelve year old son, Balakrishnan, and at once showed herself, in striking contrast to her predecessor, to be bright and helpful. This was a great relief after the previous painful session. I was able to record the name of her *tarawad*, but did not manage to ascertain that of the household into which she had married.

She told me that she had had five husbands, all of them paid (free) agricultural labourers, living as *kudiyiruppu* tenants of the same Cheralayam Nambidi *janmi*. She did not know the amount of rent paid yearly, but told me that her husbands' family had been settled here for a very long time - for eighty or a hundred years, as she put it. They had little work to do, not enough in fact to keep such a large family alive. They had been toddy tappers once. Kalyany had been married publicly

[Text continues on p. 189]

127
524 members have been the ablest of all in adapting themselves and in taking advantage of the new opportunities which the Europeans brought. To them have gone the best and most rewarding jobs both in and out of the administration, positions of trust and responsibility to which their long training as soldiers and managers of the upper castes in Kerala had possibly prepared them. I was astonished to find how many well-known names in present-day India still have their homes and families in Ottapalam of the Walluvanad taluk.

It has already been said how very much the Tiyaas, everywhere in Kerala, have progressed, and how they, too, have taken enormous advantage of changed circumstances, especially education, to become today one of the most progressive communities in the State. Aiyappan's book is witness to this. Perhaps only the lower castes, such as Kammalans, other artisans, Cherumas, Pulayas, aboriginals and the poorer section of the Mopla Islamic community, have remained as they always were, and have shown no signs of taking advantage of the benefits brought in by foreign rule. It is not to be excluded, however, that it may be precisely for them that the new Communist government will legislate, especially for the landless agricultural labourers – but it is too early to say anything about this yet.¹

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595 Following closely upon the replacement of the old order by a new one, polyandry, too, has crumbled in Kerala. The Nayars, whose non-fraternal polyandrous customs so forcibly struck the early Portuguese and other European travellers, have ceased to practise polyandry, at least in the pristine form in which it was described by the ancient writers. Since this polyandry appears to have been closely correlated with the military organization of the Sudra militiamen of the local rajas and chieftains, it was perhaps to be expected that, when the latter disappeared, the custom of non-fraternal polyandrous marriage went with it. 128] Particularly as men living in a *marumakkathayam* system of inheritance seem to suffer greatly from the fact that they can leave nothing to their children, but only to those of their sisters. In a conversation that I had with His Highness the Maharaja of Cochin, at Ernakulam on the 18th of April, 1949, he told me that it was "un-natural" for a man not to be able to provide for his own children, and that, in his opinion, the custom could not survive much longer for this reason.

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427 ¹ A step has been taken in this direction with *The Kerala Agrarian Relations Bill 1957* which introduces comprehensive land reforms, including the right of "permanent tenants" to purchase land held by them, a ceiling on land holdings and fixation of fair rents.

406 The mhoote too is seldom seen in these parts. The more common sorts of water-lifters are (1) an oval shaped bamboo-basket (costing about As. 2); (2) a wooden groove provided with a handle, costing about Re. 1; (3) and a frame-work consisting of two long bamboos, one small and another big in size balanced on a horizontal beam which is supported by two vertical poles; a picottah is attached to the small-sized bamboo and is drawn up and brought down by one or two persons standing opposite each other on two planks thrown across the middle of the well. The whole frame together with the picottah costs about Rs. 2. The oval shaped basket and the wooden groove are used to spread water from water courses and not from wells. Two persons, generally women, stand opposite each other on the side of a watercourse and pull the basket towards themselves by means of ropes tied round its 'ears' after filling it up with water; the extreme ease and facility with which they carry on the operations, often to the accompaniment of a snatch of song, is wonderful. The wooden groove is allowed to swing on a string and is moved to and fro by a person holding the handle.

651 The classes into which wet and dry lands are divided, the extent of each and the amount of assessment are subjoined.

Classes.	Wet lands.						Dry lands.					
	Single crop.			Double crop.			Single crop.					
	Area.		Assessment.	Area.		Assessment.	Area.		Assessment.			
	ACS.	C.	RS. A. P.	ACS.	C.	RS. A. P.	ACS.	C.	RS. A. P.	ACS.	C.	RS. A. P.
I ...	35	65	116 7 9	320	74	1,527 5 5	301	48	261 11 3			
II ...	4	56	15 10 9	59	72	210 6 3	12	69	3 12 8			
III ...	16	0	36 0 7	39	73	114 6 0	212	60	77 5 7			
IV ...	21	37	39 9 8	15	51	34 11 2	68	39	17 10 3			
V ...	109	59	147 9 11	11	5	17 12 11	207	53	44 6 8			
VI ...	18	6	34 10 10	1	24	3 2 5	56	49	3 13 8			
VII ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	78	3	37 0 3			

35 The selling prices of cultivable wet land in the village are approximately Class I Rs. 1,500, Class II Rs. 1,000, Class III Rs. 800 Class IV Rs. 500—600, Class V Rs. 500.

311 The land is classified according to tenure as follows:—

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- | | | |
|--|---|------------------|
| I. 'Pandaravaka Verumpattam' (Sirkar) non-favourable tenure. | { Nilams (wet land) (A. 86'73).
Parambas (dry land) (A. 210'88). | } 109 pattadars. |
| II. 'Pandaravaka Kanam' (Sirkar) favourable tenure. | { Nilams (A. 2'19) ...
Parambas (7 cents) ... | |
| III. 'Puravaka' (outside Sirkar). | { Nilams (A. 563'61) ...
Parambas (A. 711'80) ... | } 54 pattadars. |
| IV. Inams (gift tenure). | { Nilams (71 cents) ...
Parambas (A. 14'47) ... | |

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The revenue paid to the State varies according to the nature of the tenure. It is only the "Pandaravaka verumpattam" lands which pay the full pattam or share due to the State. The Pandaravaka verumpattamdars have full rights to the soil of the lands they hold and their rights remain undisturbed so long as they regularly pay the State revenue, but the rights to metals and minerals are reserved to the State.

In *Pandaravaka kanam*, the land is held on a lease in consideration of a sum of money supposed to have been advanced to the State, and consequently a certain amount is deducted from the State demand on account of interest on the amount advanced. Before the new settlement was made in 1905 it was the custom to renew the lease every twelve years on the renewal of which the kanamdar was to pay over 20 per cent of the kanam amount, plus half of the full pattam (rent) for one year and a fee of 5 per cent of the kanam amount or Rs. 3-2-0 (whichever is greater) for issuing a fresh renewal. But this practice is now done away with and the tenure is for all practical purposes the same as Pandaravaka verumpattam tenure with this difference only that from the assessment due thereon a deduction of one-third is made.

In Puravaka lands (literally lands which are outside) a third party called the Janmi is recognized as holding proprietorship and therefore entitled to share the produce with the cultivator and the Sirkar. The tenure is assessed by the Sirkar in the case of nilams at half the rates fixed for Pandaravaka verumpattam nilams and in the case of parambas at one-fourth.

Inams are personal grants or grants made in some cases for the performance of certain specified services in religious institutions, etc., and in others for services rendered on some previous occasion or for some other similar reasons either absolutely or on certain specified conditions. The deductions range from free assessment to one-third of the Pandaravaka verumpattam assessment.

In all these cases of tenure a royalty cess of six pies per rupee calculated on Pandaravaka verumpattam assessment is payable to the Sirkar.

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The *Janmis* of Puravaka land let their land under different tenures, viz., verumpattam in which they make full assessment; kanam and inam they treat as favourable, but the rates are not so fixed or settled as those of the Sirkar's tenures. The leases of the kanam* lands of the janmis are also renewed for twelve years, the janmi collecting certain dues from their tenants for the renewal of the same. The title of the tenant of such lands is precarious for the kanamdar can be evicted on the janmi paying back the kanam amount† at the end of the lease of twelve years. This state of affairs was unsatisfactory, and the State Government has recently passed a Bill called the "Cochin Tenancy Bill" of 1914, an extremely moderate measure indeed, passed in the teeth of much opposition from the Janmis. The Regulation intends "to make better provision for the payment of compensation for the improvements made by tenants, and provide for the speedy realization of rent and other customary dues, by investing the District

* [Kanam = lease. Kanamdars = leaseholders.—Ed.]

† I.e., the amount the kanamdar has deposited with the Janmi at the time of taking up the lease.

421 Munsifs and District Judges with summary jurisdiction in the matter." The provisions in the regulation apply only to "Kanam tenants who, by themselves or through their predecessors in interest, have uninterruptedly held the holding for a period of not less than thirty years prior to the coming into force of this Regulation," and provide some restrictions on the part of the landlord in matters of renewal of kanam holdings, and ejection of kanam tenants; and dispense altogether with the right of *Melkanam*. The Puravaka janmis in Watakancheri number 54, of whom a few are Nambudri Brahmans, the others being of various castes. The Nambudris are the big landlords.

423 These janmis also are in some cases the custodians of "devaswoms" (literally "wealth of the gods"), lands belonging to the local temples; these are treated by them just like their janmam lands, but they keep separate accounts for the same. The Sirkar also manages devaswom lands and there is a department in the State which manages the affairs of the temples and the property belonging to them.

Of the total number of landowners (about 150), only 34 with an area of 194.44 acres cultivate their own lands. The rest sublet.

Of the non-cultivating landowners a few are big janmis like the Nambudri Brahmans and the Paliath Atchan. The Nambudri Brahmans pursue no occupation but that of living in strict conformity with the duties of a Brahman. They study the Vedas and live a pious and cleanly life. Western civilization and ideas have not

[426] penetrated to them. They maintain the joint-property system in which the whole property descends to the eldest male member. [831] Only the eldest male is allowed to enter into legal marriage, but he can marry two or three women; the rest keep Nayar females as their mistresses.*

The "Paliath Atchan" possesses much land in the State. The head of the family lives in a place near Cranganore. He manages his estates through departments and officials like the Sirkar. He is the biggest landlord in the State, and a powerful hereditary chief.

The small landowners who do not cultivate their lands pursue occupations like retail trade, Government service, law, etc. These generally sublet their lands to tenants who own no lands and try to exact from these latter as much rent as possible. There are also agricultural workers who neither own nor rent land; the caste of "Cherumas" belongs to this class. Also a few of the low castes, the Mappilas and in some cases the Christians,—male and female—engage themselves in such work. They are low paid. Formerly these wages were in kind, but money wages have begun to prevail; but for harvesting work wages are invariably paid in kind, the worker receiving one para of paddy for every six gathered in.

The rents of paddy lands are paid in kind.

243 Agriculture.—Paddy is grown on all the wet lands. Out of the seasons, the cultivators also grow to a small extent such grains as gram and peas in the paddy lands. Area under paddy—653.24 acres.

* [This phrase must not be understood to mean that such Nayar women are maintained in any way by their Nambudri paramours. They depend on their own family property, which descends in the female line. The children of Nambudri Brahmans and Nayar women are reckoned Nayars, and are members of the joint family of the mother, and entitled to maintenance from that family property.—Ed.]

435 Site values of land for building are getting higher and higher in the 'town', chiefly because the Shoranur-Cochin Railway now runs through this place, the principal offices of the taluk are here, and a high school has just been opened. Rs. 500 per acre may be paid in the 'town'; Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 in the rest of the village area. But the best wet land fetches up to Rs. 1,500 per acre. Cultivable land fetches far higher prices than building land, because only land unfit for cultivation, of which there is enough, is used for building.

423 The practice of exchanging lands is unknown. Generally, though not always, holdings are continuous. Field huts, built in the midst of their fields, are often used by big farmers. The seeds, the harvested paddy and other crops, the stock, the implements, etc., are kept there.

286 *Subsidiary industries.*—Weaving is not practised. In the north-eastern part of the State, however, handloom weaving of an exquisite sort and also of a rough character is practised.

285 Mat-weaving of an exquisite pattern out of certain reeds duly coloured is practised by a set of people locally known as 'Koravas'.

735 The condition of these men, however, is miserable. They have no capital, no organization or culture, but usually make their wares to order, though now and then a few enterprising middlemen avail themselves of these people's skill. They talk a jargon of Tamil and Malayalam, and their females, like gipsies, beg from house to house and profess themselves to be adepts in palmistry. They make mats costing from Re. 1 to Rs. 15 or Rs. 20. They yet live from hand to mouth; and I have my doubts whether they will be able to keep up their skill unless knowing people help to raise their economic condition.

564 Every village moreover contains within its borders the following castes who follow their hereditary crafts:—the Marasari (carpenter), Kallasari (mason), Tattan (goldsmith), Musari (brazier), Kollan (blacksmith), and Tolkollan (leather-worker). There are a few families of each of these castes in Watakanchery also. "As their services are much in requisition and as they earn better wages than unskilled labourers, they are still engaged in their hereditary occupation. The first five groups are socially in a par with each other. They all interdine, but do not intermarry. But the Tolkollans are considered inferior in status to the rest and cannot touch them without causing pollution, probably on account of their work in leather which in its raw state is considered impure. [595] Polyandry of the fraternal type was prevalent among them, several brothers marrying one wife and the children being treated as common to all. This practice however is fast dying out, if it has not already done so." (Census Reports.) One special feature in the caste-hierarchy is that these people are made to stand at a specified distance while approaching the higher castes (24 feet is the rule).

466 These castes minister to the every day needs of the community, executing their work generally to order. As they are very poor, they cannot afford to work on their own account on a commercial scale. 326 The village usually contains a recognized *desa-asari* (village smith) to whom the farmers pay a certain amount of paddy at the harvesting season of the year for the repair of their implements. None but the village-smith is entitled to this dole. These may entertain apprentices from their own caste-people, though the

MALABAR DISTRICT.

GURUVAYUR (PONNANI TALUK).

[By V. Lakshmana Aiyar, Christian College, Madras.]

361 Preliminary.—Guruvayur is situated in the southern part of the Ponnani taluk, and is only 2 miles distant from the Arabian Sea. It is close to the backwater which extends from the northern point of the taluk to Cochin and Travancore. To the east it is only 3 miles distant from the State of Cochin. It is 14 miles away from the capital town of the taluk through which flows the chief river of Malabar. No forests can be seen throughout the whole taluk. 133 The whole taluk is one red sandy mass with no waste lands, no mountains or hills. The chief crop of the village and perhaps of the whole taluk is coconut.

423 Malabar land tenure.—The system of land tenure that obtains in Malabar is entirely different from that of other districts. No doubt the theory that the Government is the legitimate owner of all the land in India and the people hold the land from the Government to which they pay a rent or tax, obtains its full significance here also. But there is an intermediary landlord, between the Government and the actual occupier of the land. How this intermediary landlord arose requires some explanation.

173 The origin of Malabar according to tradition is that a demi-god Parasurama reclaimed from the sea the portion of land extending from Gokarnam (Bombay) to Cape Comorin and from the Western Ghats to the sea. This demi-god having killed 21 times all the Kshatriyas, and having surrendered to Rama all his possessions after trial of battle, wanted a place to live in. He ordered the sea to recede and thus formed these lands. Malabar is a portion of that land. What historical facts are concealed in this tradition it is not easy to know but it may be guessed that in the general organizing of the Deccan, a certain number of Aryans * crossed the Western Ghats and reclaimed the lands from forest and wild beasts and made it habitable for civilized men. They may have dominated the original inhabitants by their superior civilization and Parasurama may have been the leader of that little band of Aryans. The tradition says that the demi-god gave all the lands he created to 64 Brahmans who became the leaders of the 64 villages into which the whole of the land was divided. These 64 Brahmans formed the original Malabar Brahmans or Nambudris, and they formed an assembly and decided matters of common concern. Individual villages decided their own matters and in every discussion of their affairs the Brahmana was the president and his opinion had perhaps the force of law. The whole village belonged to him and he was the Uralla or the chief man of the village. As time went on the one important family extended its branches and each branch had an equal voice in the affairs of the village. The one became many. I shall refer later to the remnants of this constitution of the village.

* [This hypothesis is ingenious, but not, in my opinion, probable.—Ed.]

Each village belonged to the Brahmana family and its branches. They might sell the land and yet they retained a certain right over it. The soil was still theirs, but the products belonged to the buyers, the trees, houses, everything standing on the soil. The right of the original family is called the janmam right, i.e., the right of inheritance from the family to which Parasurama gave the land. Every year this janmam-holder receives a certain sum from the occupier. This janmam right can also be sold, or the janmi may lose the right if he fails to exercise it every twelve years. In such ways the janmam right has in some cases passed into the possession of other castes, but the Nambudri Brahmins are still the chief janmis. It is said that no Sudras held janmam rights before the general confusion due to the invasion of Tipu, when powerful individuals usurped the right. In other cases the Brahmins themselves gave up the janmam right in favour of temples, friends, Sudra wives, or through immoderate living. The selling or leasing of the right to occupy the land must be renewed every twelve years according to the present law. If this is not done the janmi loses his right, and deeds executed by him cease to be valid. This he will never do. So what is generally done is that the janmi at the end of twelve years asks the lessee (or "kanomdar") to give back his land, offering him the value of what stands on the land at the end of twelve years. The kanomdar is helpless. He has worked during the time, by planting trees, building houses, etc. He has not yet enjoyed the result of his labour. The janmi is now offering a very low price. If the kanomdar does not accept it he is dragged to the court, and the court fixes a price according to the Tenants Improvements Act. He must accept the price and give back the land, or make terms with the janmi. The janmi demands a heavy fine for the renewal of the lease. The possessor compares the demand with the work he has done and the annual value of the land. If he thinks it beneficial to him to keep the land for another twelve years after paying the demand, he pays it; otherwise he gives back the land. Sometimes a different person comes to the janmi and bribes him to give the land to him, and offers the actual possessor the value of the products. In spite of the fact that the occupier has worked there twelve years he is now deprived of his home. This is done in so many cases that it is a real grievance to the people.

The result of this system of land tenure is that the agricultural population has no inducement for work, for tenants do not know whether they will retain the land after twelve years or whether the janmi will deprive them of the same. Suppose the kanomdar has worked tremendously and increased the capital invested in the land tenfold, from Rs. 100 to Rs. 1,000. What is the result? The janmi sees the land producing enormously. He knows that the possessor will be very unwilling to lose the land. To the extent of that unwillingness he raises the demand for money to renew the lease. He knows that instead of Rs. 100 he can now demand Rs. 200 or 300 or 500 or even 900 (not of course Rs. 1,000). This is actually done. The possessor cannot but give the money, with the consolation, if it is a consolation at all, that for tenfold work, he gets the opportunity to enjoy one-tenth of the product of his labour. There is yet another danger for a hard worked man, for

423 his neighbour seeing the improvements resorts to bribery in order to get the land.

242 Further this system results in the disregard of agricultural principles. Supposing only ten coconut palms should be planted in a certain portion of land, the possessor actually plants fifteen or sixteen because at the end of twelve years he will get the value of fifteen or sixteen trees according to the Tenants Improvements Act. If he is content with planting only ten according to agricultural principles, he gets only the value of ten. For many years past there has been no attempt towards scientific cultivation, as a consequence of this, in the whole of Malabar. It is impossible to do so. Disregard of science means gain; regard for it means loss. There is an evident deterioration in the production of the land in Malabar due to absence of security, and disregard of science. Lands which brought a gain of Rs. 1,000 do not now bring even Rs. 400 or Rs. 500. An improvement in this system of land tenure by means of legislation would evidently increase the fertility of Malabar.

Population.—Total population 7,596.*

Castes and individuals in each caste—

162

Name of caste.	Families.	Members.
Nambudri or Malabar Brahmans ...	36	146
East Coast Brahmans or Brahmans who have emigrated to Malabar from the east ...	107	653
Nayars and their sub-sects ...	382	1,305
Tiyyas and their sub-sects ...	437	2,461
Muhammadans ...	331	2,307
Christians ...	118	592
Artisan castes, etc. ...	17	117
Total ...	1,428	7,581

163

Number of children under ten in families—Living 3,490, dead 928.

165

Number of homesteads—1,290.

		1915.	
		Births.	Deaths.
Boys ...	...	178	76
Girls ...	...	158	80
Total ...	...	336*	156*

165

The following table of deaths may be useful:—

Children between ages	0—10	...	87*
Between ages	10—20	...	2
"	21—25	...	8
"	26—30	...	8
"	31—35	...	6
"	36—40	...	4

Birth-rate ... 44.2 per thousand.
 Death-rate ... 20.5 "
 Death-rate for children 0—10 ... 259 per thousand births.
 Density of population ... 3.231 per square mile.—Ed.]

Between ages	41-50	...	...	...	11
"	51-60	...	...	...	9
"	61-70	...	...	...	9
"	71-80	...	...	...	10
84 years of age	...	...	...	...	1
92 "	...	...	...	...	1
					156

165

It is to be noted that infant deaths are more than half the total deaths and number 87 out of 156 last year.

This information is not fully accurate because the people do not report births and deaths generally to the village officials and consequently they have to ascertain the facts by inquiring and it is possible that some births or deaths escape their notice. The ignorance of the people and the unnecessary fear of post-mortem examination in the case of deaths explain their silence. Probably a considerable number of infant deaths escape report.

Paracheri.—Three families, 15 members.—7 women, 8 men.

Number of dead for the last ten years—

Family No. 1	...	...	...	...	7
" " 2	...	...	...	...	5
" " 3	...	...	...	...	4

The village lana—

	ACS.
Garden lands	792 $\frac{1}{2}$
Wet lands	360 $\frac{1}{2}$
Dry "	135 $\frac{1}{2}$
Government lands	14 $\frac{1}{2}$
Inam lands	201 $\frac{1}{4}$

311

Total ... 1,504 $\frac{17}{4}$

There are no waste lands.

The principal fruit trees are mangoes, jacks, plantains, and there are not many though sufficient for the village consumption.

245

There are tanks and wells in plenty. Drinking water is got from wells; and the tanks are used for bathing and for agricultural purposes.

312

Occupation of land and Agriculture.—The number of kanomdars in the village is 385. The large kanomdars do not generally cultivate the land themselves.

423

The land is divided into small strips, each strip containing from 50 to 1,000 coconut palms. The large kanomdar takes his residence on one of these strips, and he himself cultivates the particular strip where he is, and gives to small tenants the remaining strips belonging to him. Consequently only about 180 acres of the whole village are cultivated by the large kanomdars. In addition to these lands three kanomdars cultivate all of their land. Two are Muhammadans and one a Tiyya. The area belonging to these three kanomdars is about 134 acres. The remaining land, 1,200 odd acres, is given to tenants to cultivate. There are also between 200 and 300 small kanomdars belonging to the agricultural classes, who hold land insufficient for their maintenance and also cultivate the lands of big kanomdars. A number of the big

[245]

423 kanomdars who live in the village also possess lands in the neighbouring villages. In the centre of the village a very sacred and important temple is situated. It has existed for nearly a thousand years, and it is believed by all the people of Malabar that many miracles have from time to time happened there. Many rich devotees have granted lands to it, and it is now the most important landowner of the village, possessing the janmam right over nearly 200 acres of land, all leased to kanomdars. A large part of the temple land is not taxed by the Government, but a low amount fixed by the Government is collected by the temple authorities for its maintenance. This kind of tax is called *Sarvamanyam*. The temple is now managed by the Court of Wards. It belonged to the Zamorin, who handed over his estate to the Court. The Zamorin is the head of a *tarwâd** of about 300 members, being the oldest man. Hence when he succeeds he is too old to manage well.

427 It has been stated that the chief kanomdars excepting three cultivate only the small strips of lands that they occupy and leave it to others to cultivate the rest of their lands. They do not follow any other occupation, but lead an idle life, collecting money from their tenants and lending their money to the poor on security of ornaments and other things. The tendency is for every man who has money to be a money-lender. The sowcars are money-lenders by profession, but every man who has money, instead of depositing it in a bank, lends it to others on high rates of interest. The landowner, the vakil, the official or any other class forms no exception to this rule. Only the traders use the bank.

427 There are 525 tenants not possessing kanom rights who hold land under kanomdars, and 54 agricultural workers having no land and not renting land. The largest tenant is a Tiyya occupying 80 acres.

Rents are paid both in money and in kind. The chief crop of the village is coconut, but nearly one-fourth of the area is under paddy cultivation. Rents of the coconut areas are paid in money, and those of paddy lands in kind.

651 *Land Revenue*.—Rs. 6,411-7-0. This is small because of the exemption of temple lands.

241 The paddy fields all give two crops per annum. When once a coconut is planted, it lasts for nearly 100 years.

412 *Implements*.—There are 542 ploughs in the village, all of the primitive type.

The other implements used are—

(1) the levelling board,
(2) a long stick for powdering the soil,
(3) a short iron instrument somewhat in the shape of a knife for sowing the seed and transplanting,

(4) a rather long handled mamoti, a broad plate of iron sharp at one end and joined to a big stick at another somewhat perpendicularly,

(5) sickles,

(6) big rods used for winnowing the paddy and for separating the grain from the straw,

[428] * [i.e., a Navar family community, having inheritance in the female line. Such an estate is the joint property of all the female members of the family and their descendants, the male members of the family also having a right during their lives to support from the family estate, but not transmitting any right to their children.—Ed.]

The statistics of births and deaths of this desam are obtainable only for the year 1915. They are given below :—

163

165

Births.

Males	...	50	Hindu	...	84
Females	...	43	Muhammadan	...	9
		93			93

Deaths.

According to age—					
Lifeless deliveries	...	...	...	...	7
Below one year	...	...	...	...	9
Between 1 and 10	...	...	...	...	13
" 10 and 20	...	...	...	...	1
" 20 and 30	...	...	...	...	7
" 30 and 40	...	...	...	...	3
" 40 and 50	...	...	...	...	...
" 50 and 60	...	...	...	...	3
" 60 and 80	...	...	...	...	5
					48

According to sex and castes—

Males	...	24	Hindus	...	43
Females	...	24	Muhammadans	...	5

There is no paracheri in the strict sense of the term. The depressed classes, mostly Cherumas, are still in a state of semi-serfdom, depending for everything on their landlords and masters.

Land.—The area of the desam by settlement is 1,803.40 acres. This desam together with Mattupalli, Peringode, Pillakkattiri, Tolukad, Mathur, Alikara, Kuttanad, Perumannur and Chalisseri desams formed the old revenue amsam of Kothachira. Now Kothachira revenue amsam includes only Kothachira, Mathur and Peringode desams.

The areas under each description of land—

	Wet.	Garden.	Occu- pied dry.	Un- occupied dry.	Un- assessed.	Inam.	Poram- boke.	Total.
Private Jenmi.	ACS. C. 445 27	ACS. C. 209 43	ACS. C. 197 16	ACS. C. 935 71	ACS. C. ...	...	...	ACS. C. 1,787 57
Government Jenmi.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Unregistered lands.	...	...	...	...	15 83	...	...	15 83
	445 27	209 43	197 16	935 71	15 83	...	...	1,803 40

423
651

The desam contains 130 survey fields in all. The settlement was first introduced in this desam in fasli 1313.

The following table shows the nature and extent of the holdings and revenue as given in the 'A' register of the village:—

Holdings and Revenue.

Occupied area.										Deduct waste remitted.		Remainder charged.			
Fasli.	Wet.		Garden.		Dry.		Total.		Extent.	Assessment.	Actual cultivation.	Waste charged.	Total extent charged.	Assessment.	
	Extent.	Assessment.	Extent.	Assessment.	Extent.	Assessment.	Extent.	Assessment.							
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	
	ACS.	RS. A.	ACS.	RS.	ACS.	RS. A.	ACS.	RS. A.			ACS.		ACS.	RS. A.	
1313	445'27	2,226 5	209'43	502	197'16	157 14	851'86	2,886 3	...	...	851'86	...	851'86	2,886 3	

Fasli—cont.	Second crop.		Miscellaneous revenue.	Total ryotwari demand excluding waste remitted.	Deduct remission other than waste already shown in column 11.			Total.	Net demand for the year.	Amount collected within year.	
	Extent.	Charge.			Occasional remission other than for waste.	Other remissions and deductions.	Arrear.			Current.	
(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)	(21)	(22)	(23)	(24)	(25)		
	ACS.	RS. A.	RS. A.	RS. A.		RS. A.	RS. A.	RS. A.		RS. A.	
1313	8'96	13 11	96 5	2,996 3	...	851 12	851 12	2,144 7	...	2,144 7	

312

The ryots mostly depend on the mercy of the monsoon for the watering of fields. But throughout the summer season beginning from the end of December to the end of July, watering is carried on from wells and tanks, especially in the case of garden cultivation. Tanks and wells are not sufficient and those existing are not deep enough and frequently dry up towards March.

241

The chief crops cultivated are coconut, arecanut, paddy, gingelly, pulses, horsegram, plantain and jack.

231

Pasturage is obtainable for the cattle on the unoccupied dry lands. Water for the cattle is obtained from channels, private tanks and wells.

There is hardly any public tank. One stream (channel) flows along the northern boundary of the desam during rainy seasons when the fields become flooded. But its utility is limited since with the summer the whole channel is dried up. There are private wells in all gardens and sometimes in the fields of corn. But they are shallow for the most part and the water-supply is inadequate. The ryots who are wretchedly poor cannot afford to utilise modern progress in the field of well-boring, nor are they conversant with such developments. 312

There are woods and forests near the desam as we have before mentioned, but they are of no practical use to the people. The forest, which is outside the boundary limit of this desam, is under Government supervision and people are not allowed to cut trees. Other resources of the forest, moreover, are hardly taken advantage of, partly by the general apathy of the cultivator for improvement and partly by its being situated sufficiently far to dissuade them from incurring the necessary loss involved. At the same time it is in a way an influence to the ryots' detriment, for tigers, boars, etc., which the Akalanum and Mattur hills breed occasionally, make nocturnal depredations on the ryots' stock and corn fields. The peasantry are helpless against these enemies. 137

Occupation of land.—The private jenmam ryotwari holdings during the year of settlement (fasli 1313) are classified as follows :— 423

Pattadars paying	NUMBER.			Extent.		Assessment.		
	Single	Joint.	Total.	ACS.	C.	Rs.	A.	
Re. 1 and less	2	...	2	...	50	1	8	
Rs. 10 and less but over Re. 1	7	2	9	7	71	33	14	
" 30 " " " 10 ...	3	2	5	18	21	96	7	
" 50 " " " 30 ...	1	...	1	7	8	37	5	
" 100 " " " 50 ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
" 250 " " " 100 ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
" 500 " " " 250 ...	1	...	1	99	56	401	13	
" 1,000 " " " 500 ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
Over 1,000 ...	1	...	1	718	80	2,315	4	
Total ...	15	4	19	851	86	2,826	3	

Out of 851'86 acres no less than 818'36 belong to the two jenmi landlords. There are no occupants of Government jenmam ryotwari land in the same year.

Almost all kanomdars are themselves cultivators. The two jenmis, who are Brahmans by caste, and nearly 10 other families

423

427

who come immediately below in the caste scale, are prohibited from cultivation by their social status, and hence have let or sublet their lands to tenants of lower castes.

427

The landholders themselves, who are in a minority, are fast disappearing. They are chiefly owners of small strips held for the most part by a kanom tenure from a jenmi. The growing indebtedness and the consequent process of alienation of lands which are now going on will ere long reduce these people to the rank of landless labourers. But the landholders must be distinguished from land owners. Strictly speaking those who own land are the pattadars who possess jenmam pattas and those few who hold from them lands on kanom tenure. The ownership of the kanomdar is very precarious, since for the most part the kanom being a small amount, and there being no governmental regulations against the arbitrary action of the jenmis, the kanomdars are at the mercy of their jenmis. The ancient right of usage of lands enjoyed by the people is now being sought to be taken away. The jenmis are oppressive in many ways. All sorts of excuses are eagerly clutched at for extorting money from the tenantry. Besides the very high rate demanded at the time of a renewal of tenure (usually these tenures are held for 12 years), there are exactions on the occasion of a death, marriage or other religious festival in the jenmi's household, and fines often in amounts more than Rs. 100 are levied right and left for silly reasons. Various instances have come within the personal knowledge of the writer. One family had to return some lands two years ago to the jenmi because when the term expired and when application was made for a renewal, the fee demanded was so high that 12 years' profit from the land could hardly equal the amount. One man was fined Rs. 100, because he refused to pay 2 annas as a subscription for a religious festival which the jenmi was then conducting. Another case of arbitrary oppression was recently reported to the writer by the sufferers. The jenmi was contemplating a pilgrimage and all tenants were asked to give Rs. 10 each for it within 24 hours! These are actual cases. Up till 1916 no man other than the two jenmis was allowed to tile his house, to build an upstairs building, or a gateway; even now it is rash for the ryot to ask for such permission. No woman is allowed to appear before the jenmi with covered breast, no man should approach him with more than single cloth wound round his waist, which should not fall below his knees. Even in these days of British rule these things are in actual existence! I have said so much to give an idea of the relation between the landlord and the tenant in this part of the country.

There are two other dangers to which the landholder is constantly exposed which need mention here, i.e., melcharth, and the recent policy of the jenmi to convert kanom holdings into verumpattam. Melcharth is the jenmi's right to make over by promise at his will to a higher bidder any portion of his land which is being enjoyed by the kanomdar under him on the strength of his right for the land for twelve years. This is constantly exercised by the jenmi and it has a very bad effect both economically and morally over the agricultural population. The other danger is of more recent origin and is the result of the panic created among the jenmis of British Malabar on the passing of the Jenmi-Kutiyam

use. No other manure is used. Green manure is not grown but is got from somewhere or other according to circumstances. Varieties are not made. Wood fuel is the only sort used.

Insect pests.—Of these, the most ruinous is the "Chazhi" the terror of the ryot. The chazhi is a small insect of the locust species half an inch long which in millions appear in a few seasons and spread desolation in the paddy fields. Two remedies are current against this pestilence: (1) catching them directly by drawing a cloth (which serves the purpose of a net) attached to two handsticks over the crops and thus killing them; (2) but by far the most efficacious remedy in the estimation of the cultivator is the putting of a talisman in the fields which a local conjurer (Mandravadi) has prepared for him. What chazhi is to paddy "Mahali" is to the arecanut, the only difference being that in this case nothing is believed to be possible to combat the calamity.

Cattle diseases are (1) hoof disease, (2) Koraladappan (swelling in the neck), (3) Thada (mumps), (4) obstruction of urine and dung, (5) sudden epileptic attacks, and other diseases whose causes and cure are unknown to the peasant. Poisoning is sometimes done by Paraiyas of neighbouring desams for the sake of getting the flesh. For beef is eaten only by this lowest class and when cattle die they will be called to remove the carcase. A number of cattle are annually destroyed by tigers also which often venture into the sheds of the peasants. Talismans and offerings to deities are conceived to be the only remedy.

No assistance is obtained from the Agricultural department, nor any from any veterinary doctor.

Wood is commonly got for all uses from private trees; but the forest also supplies sometimes wood for small necessities. For building purposes, wood is purchased—not from any fixed place.

Houses.—The depressed castes have miserable hovels for their houses. A mud wall of five feet height with a ruined roof which can protect the inmate neither from sun nor rain is the order of the day.

Except the palatial family homes of the two jenmis, there are no tiled houses. Terracing is not customary here. All other houses are thatched, and thatching is always of straw.

Most houses have gardens surrounding them, where arecanut trees, plantains, mango trees, jack, etc., are grown. They are joyful to look at.

The maximum distance of cultivated lands from the home of cultivator is one mile.

An acre of land costs from Rs. 200 to Rs. 300. But purchases on jenmi tenure are worth above Rs. 500. But it is impossible to acquire jenmam property except for jenmis; for the jenmis are jealous guardians of their lands and never sell lands once acquired. Direct threatenings and indirect intimidation are used by them to obtain the jenmam right of lands if held by any lesser landowner.

Subsidiary industries.—Neither weaving nor spinning have ever been practised in this desam.

Other crafts—

1. Arrack and jaggery making.
2. Ironsmith.

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Kerala All

MALABAR

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Less than Re. 1	...	...	...	...	54
From Re. 1 to Rs. 5	...	...	...	...	100
" Rs. 5 to Rs. 10	...	...	...	...	49
" Rs. 10 to Rs. 20	...	...	...	...	22
" Rs. 20 to Rs. 30	...	...	...	...	10
" Rs. 30 to Rs. 50	...	...	...	...	19
More than Rs. 50	...	...	...	...	4
					258

Many especially of those paying under Rs. 2 hold only the plots of ground in which their dwellings are erected.

Classification of holdings according to ownership.

Pattadars paying an assessment of	Number.	Extent.	Assessment.
I. Re. 1 and less	2	ACS. 0'26	RS. A. P. 0 15 0
II. Over Re. 1 and up to Rs. 10 (inclusive).	22	28'04	95 8 0
III. " Rs. 10 " " 30 "	7	26'44	139 6 0
IV. " " 30 " " 50 "	6	65'04	234 7 0
V. " " 50 " " 100 "	3	55'59	196 5 0
VI. " " 100 " " 250 "	2	106'97	301 4 0
VII. " " 250 " " 500 "	1	62'15	274 7 0
VIII. " " 500 " " 1,000 "	...	...	...
IX. Over Rs. 1,000	1	645'04	2,469 1 0

Thus the greater part of the cultivated land is owned by a single pattadar—a Nambudiripad, a very enlightened and sympathetic landlord who has a reputation for fairness and kind treatment. The majority of the other pattadars are also Nambudiris, very often holding the land as trustees of temples.

The following table shows the rate of assessment, area so assessed, with amount of assessment, of wet, dry and garden lands:—

	I. Wet land.		II. Garden land.		III. Occupied dry land.		IV. Unoccupied dry land.	
	ACS.	RS. A.	ACS.	RS. A.	ACS.	RS. A.	ACS.	RS. A.
At Rs. 7-8 per acre.	108'49	813 11	...	...	...	...	...	...
" 6-4 "	194'87	1,215 15	...	...	...	...	...	...
" 6-0 "	0'09	0 9	0'03	0 3	...	...	...	...
" 5-0 "	109'06	542 11	2'28	11 6	...	...	...	...
" 4-0 "	39'21	157 5	7'09	28 6	...	...	...	...
" 3-12 "	7'69	28 15	...	...	...	...	...	...
" 3-0 "	93'37	280 1	14'28	42 14	...	...	...	...
" 2-0 "	128'00	256 13	36'43	72 14	3'23	6 9	43'53	87 0
" 1-8 "	...	...	...	...	61'87	92 5	122'82	184 3
" 1-0 "	...	...	49'48	49 14	98'84	99 0	288'66	288 11
" 0-12 "	...	...	...	...	38'57	28 15	643'77	482 13
" 0-10 "	...	...	...	...	3'42	2 3	148'42	92 12
Total	680'78	3,296 0	109'59	205 9	205'93	229 0	1,247'20	1,135 7

actually go without the needed food and keep body and soul together as best they can. Well may economists and others speak of the power of resistance of the Indian peasant, his power of doing without! I wish I had some photographs of the living skeletons who call forth this praise!! But they are proud; they will never tell you the whole story. The village schoolmasters tell me that boys do not attend school regularly (though it is free) owing to actual starvation, cold hunger takes away all appetite for study. There are practically very few who do not owe something to the village money-lenders. Tenants are always in arrears with their rents; they sometimes even consume the grain reserved for seed. Villagers come begging for small loans just to tide over difficulties from day to day. The high rate of interest includes a large percentage of insurance for risk. Debts vary from a few rupees to hundreds. Exact information is not available.

Causes of indebtedness.—Poverty is of course the chief cause; other causes are want of suitable work, especially for women of the lower classes, the low rate of wages, due in its turn to inefficiency and weakness in bargaining, which exist side by side with improvident habits of the labourers, who are as a rule ignorant (though intelligent) and stoic; the growth of population without a proportionate increase in agricultural products and foodstuffs; the high, almost ruinous rates of interest, often as high as 36 per cent, which are both a cause and a result of poverty; an all round rise in prices, especially in foodstuffs; fast living and improvident habits among the richer—though this is rare—due to the desire to better their standard of life in response to western influences coming from cities. The Brahmans borrow largely to educate their sons and to marry their daughters. General extravagance is however unknown especially in food and dress. Many of the poorer villagers beg you to give them a meal or one of your old used up cloths.

Only a very small percentage, not more than 10 per cent, of the debtors have liberated themselves from debt. The tendency is for a perpetuation of debts. Debt is driving many villagers to other and distant places. When they have earned a small sum they return, but are soon forced into their old state. Of course provident habits do not always exist.

There is no co-operative credit society in the village.

There is no communal income of any sort in the village.

Selling prices of land.—Owing to the prestige and social importance of landownership, the landowning class never sell their lands even for good prices unless driven to it by necessity. This raises the price of land. The rights of ownership peculiar to Malabar, known as janmam, are very complete and thorough and not ordinarily found in ryotwari areas. Janmam land yields very low rates of interest on the price paid for it; prices are so high, having risen 25 to 50 per cent in recent times. Janmam land is usually let out on lease, usually for twelve years renewable at the option of the owner, if the due renewal fees are paid. Even Kanom tenure rights have risen in value, though they depend so much on the good will of the landlord, the tenants having no legal protection against eviction, or arbitrary enhancement of rents. Kanom lands

- 423 are sublet to the actual cultivators, who are a rack-rented peasantry. The Kanom tenant, even when he does not himself cultivate the land, gets a higher return than the janmi on his capital; this is probably due to the insecurity of his tenure and his assumption of risks in relation to the actual cultivators. The renewal fees are heavy and many people contract debt to pay them. Some unscrupulous janmis or their agents arbitrarily enhance the rents payable by the Kanomdar and turn him out if he refuses to pay. The principal landlord of this village does not belong to this class.
- 435
- 796 The village spends between Rs. 150 and Rs. 200 annually on religious festivals. This is the common expenditure and is raised by subscription. It excludes small individual expenditures.
- The village temple was built many years ago. No new one has been built.
- 164 *Sanitary condition.*—Malaria is unknown, but other fevers are occasionally seen. Cholera visits the village at rare intervals. Plague is unknown. Tuberculosis may be rarely met with. Small-pox also visits the village at rare intervals. From 125 to 150 out of every 1,000 children born die in their first year. Thus in 1915 while 81 children were born 10 died before completing one year. This is the figure given in the village register. It needs some correction and the figures should be slightly higher. The rate of infantile mortality varies with the seasons, etc. A few cases of snake-bites are recorded, but fatality owing to this cause is not high. I hear that sometimes the Hon'ble Moopil Nayar of Kavalappara (our representative in the Legislative Council) gives free medical help in such cases.
- 759 No reliable medical assistance of an effective kind is available. There are no English doctors in or near the village and few could afford to pay their fees even if they did exist. There are one or two ayurvedic physicians, whom one should more correctly call quacks.* They have no scientific knowledge and cannot properly diagnose. They take advantage of the simple credulity and superstition of the ignorant villagers and give an air of mystery to their art by the practice of superstitious rites akin to witchcraft. I believe there is much preventible disease in the village. Some remedy is badly needed. It would be a useful reform that the village officers and the village schoolmasters should know something of medicine, hygiene, and sanitation. Then they could at least instruct the villagers as to what ought not to be done in the care and treatment of the sick. There is a proposal now to found an ayurvedic college and laboratory at Shoranur, near our village. When it is accomplished a better state of things is hoped for, as the physicians would be really capable men and reliable, though practising the ayurvedic system, in which the people have faith.
- 273 Insanitary habits are rare. The Cherumas and other depressed classes drink. Chewing of tobacco and betel is common, but this
- 276 can hardly be called insanitary.

* This remark does not apply to real students and practitioners of the indigenous system of medicine, but only to the unworthy representatives of the science in the village. There is high official and non-official testimony to the real worth of ayurveda as it ought to be practised, and as it is practised by many learned persons all over the country.

land is the chief source of a livelihood and industries do not exist. What is the conclusion? The increasing emigration to other places points in the same direction. The fact that the emigrants return as soon as they earn something shows that they are not likely to leave home unless hard-pressed. The increasing indebtedness of the villagers and the growth in the number of assignments and mortgages are other evidence. But population has increased only 7 per cent between 1901 and 1911. Wages are very low and have not risen in proportion to prices. Prices of food-stuffs have in many cases doubled within my own personal knowledge. Articles like milk, ghee, etc., have doubled in price within the last ten years. The price of grain has risen enormously in a generation. I have been told on good authority that some fifty years ago grain was four times as cheap as to-day. Only the land-owning classes and those who have surplus grain to sell have profited from this high rise. Many independent owners of land have been forced to sell their land to keep themselves free from debt and to pay the Government taxes. Taxation is much heavier: when the settlement was introduced into the village some twelve years ago the assessment was doubled and many villagers suffered. Against all this evidence of deterioration one must place the improvement in the standard of living of some classes and the growth of education, though unsatisfactory in many respects.

As for possibilities of economic improvement and the opportunities therefor, it may be said that the former are many, the latter few (as things now are) unless the villagers get help from outside—from the Government. In the sphere of agriculture improvement is badly needed, though the means of bringing it seem to be lacking, methods of cultivation could be improved and the use of scientific manure introduced. But all this requires capital and that is conspicuous by its absence. The advantage must be practically demonstrated to the cultivator and to the landlord, who alone can take the initiative herein. It seems to be impossible to introduce scientific farming so long as the system of scattered and strip holdings continues. The landlord must get his lands continuous; as it is as many as half a dozen landlords may have strips of land in one survey division of half a dozen acres. A man holding 10 acres may have it in 20 parcels, a distance of a mile from one plot to another is not uncommon.

About the possibility of extending the area of irrigated land only an expert could speak with confidence. As it is, out of a total area of 2,380 acres only 680.78 acres are wet land and 110 acres garden land—the rest coming under 'uncultivated or occupied dry.' It would be a very good thing if more land could be brought under cultivation than at present. It does not appear that many more wells could be sunk with advantage. At present the wet and garden lands abound in wells, the dry land being without any. It would not pay to sink wells in dry land and take out water according to the existing methods. If cheaper and more efficient methods are possible, then it would be worth attempting.

Something might be done—must be done, if the village is to improve—to ameliorate the general condition of the villagers and

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